STUDENT WELLBEING AND ENGAGEMENT POLICY

North Melbourne Primary School

Issue Date: July 2026

Review Date: July 2028

STUDENT WELLBEING AND ENGAGEMENT POLICY

Help for non-English speakers
If you need help to understand the information in this policy, please contact the school office on (03) 9329 6902.

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.

North Melbourne 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, 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. This policy encompasses both campuses of North Melbourne Primary School - Errol Street Campus and Molesworth Street Campus.

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POLICY

1. School profile

North Melbourne Primary School is two kilometres north-west of the Melbourne Central Business District. Its local government area is the City of Melbourne. The original school was established in 1874 and remains one of a few schools close to the city centre. In 2023, North Melbourne Primary School adopted a dual campus model, with the new Molesworth Street campus located 500 meters from the original campus. The Errol Street campus now serves students in Grades 3 to 6, while the Molesworth Street campus accommodates students from Prep to Grade 2.

Both campuses face on to local housing, and nearby are the Victoria Market, major hospitals, secondary and tertiary educational settings, and an array of businesses.

Students are drawn from the north and west of the city from the suburbs of North Melbourne, West Melbourne, Parkville, and inner City of Melbourne.

Students are grouped in year level cohorts and are housed in a mix of older buildings and contemporary learning spaces. The Molesworth Street Campus is a vertical school, with students from Prep to Year 2 working in open plan learning spaces. Classes work within a dedicated home group area. The learning spaces can be rearranged to provide large and small active and quiet spaces or zones and allow opportunity for innovative teaching and learning. Students from Years 3 to 6 work in more traditional classrooms.

There are dedicated teaching spaces for specialist subjects including a gymnasium, science and art facilities and the kitchen garden program. The kitchen garden program is run under the auspices of the Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden Foundation. The school provides specialist teaching in performing arts (drama and music), visual arts, physical education, science, Auslan and learning intervention and support.

External spaces include a large synthetic turf play area, grassed and asphalt play spaces, playground equipment suited to different age groups and quiet shaded areas for seating and passive play. 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

The North Melbourne Primary School philosophy is underpinned by the following beliefs and practices:

- All children can learn
- Learning outcomes will be maximised when children feel safe, connected, and engaged at school
- Students are encouraged to be active and self-directed in their learning
- Our school values (Responsible, Inclusive, Sagacious and Ethical) are reflected in all that we do

Our school's vision is that students will contribute positively to their local, national and global communities.

3. Wellbeing and engagement strategies

North Melbourne Primary 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

- implementation of the School Wide Positive Behaviour Support (SWPBS) framework where we define, teach and reinforce positive behaviours for all students. This approach focuses on building a safe and positive environment in which all students can learn through the establishment of processes, procedures and programs such as:
    - Matrix of Expected Behaviour
    - Whole School Behaviour Support Response
    - Acknowledgement System - 'RISE awards' and House Points
    - Social and Emotional Learning (Wellbeing Curriculum) with support of the school's MHWL.
    - Respectful Relationships using the Resilience, Rights & Respectful Relationships learning materials
- high and consistent expectations of all staff, students and parents and carers
- the Berry Street Educational Model (BSEM) provides a trauma-informed and positive education framework that supports academic and personal growth; staff embed a range of BSEM strategies in daily practice, including whole-school approaches such as Brain Breaks and Morning Circles.
- 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, Pivot, student management data and school level assessment data
- deliver a viable curriculum and ensure that students can choose ways of learning tailored to their strengths and needs
- teachers at North Melbourne Primary School use the North Melbourne Primary School instructional model to ensure an explicit, common and shared understanding of instruction to ensure that evidenced-based, high yield teaching practices are incorporated into all lessons
- teachers at North Melbourne 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 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 whole school and year level 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. 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 whole school events, such as buddy programs, lunch time clubs and athletics
- all students are welcome to self-refer to the Student Wellbeing Coordinator, School Nurse, Year Coordinator, 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
- programs, incursions and excursions developed to address issue specific needs or behaviour (i.e. Ysafe)
- The School Breakfast Clubs program offers free and healthy food for students three times per week at our Errol Street Campus. Students from either campus are welcome to attend.
- opportunities for student inclusion (i.e. sports teams, clubs, recess and lunchtime activities)
- 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

- Implementation of the School Wide Positive Behaviour Support (SWPBS) Tier 2 framework. This approach focuses on targeted, early-intervention supports for the roughly 10-15% of students who require more assistance than the universal, whole-school strategies (Tier 1) provide. It aims to prevent the escalation of behavioral challenges and social-emotional difficulties before they become severe.
- small group intervention, through Social Stencil led by a member of the Wellbeing team.
- each year group has a Year Level Coordinator, 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
- 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
- our English as a second language students are supported through our EAL program, and all cultural and linguistically diverse students are supported to feel safe and included in our school

- we support learning and wellbeing outcomes of students from refugee background through consultation with families and where required, student support groups and individual education plans
- we provide a positive and respectful learning environment for our students who identify as LGBTQIA+ and follow the Department's policy on LGBTQIA+ 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 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
- the wellbeing team 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
- students enrolled under the Department's international student program are supported in accordance with our legal obligations and Department policy and guidelines at: International Student Program

Individual
North Melbourne Primary School implements a range of strategies that support and promote individual engagement. These can include:

- Tier 3 School-Wide Positive Behaviour Support (SWPBS) focuses on highly individualised, intensive interventions for the small percentage of students (usually about 1-5%) who have not responded to universal (Tier 1) or targeted (Tier 2) supports.The primary goal is to reduce the complexity, frequency, and intensity of severe behavioral challenges to improve the student's safety, well-being, and academic success
- 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
    - 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 Child First

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

North Melbourne 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.

North Melbourne 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
- survey tools, including Pivot.

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 and School Philosophy 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 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 and School Philosophy/Student Code of Conduct. Violence, bullying, and other offensive and harmful behaviours such as racism, harassment and discrimination is not 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, North Melbourne Primary School will institute a staged response, consistent with the department's policies on behaviour, discipline and student wellbeing and engagement. North Melbourne Primary School's Behaviour Management Procedure can be accessed on our school's website. This procedure sets out the sequence of actions to be taken in the case of 'Major Behaviours' and 'Minor Behaviours'. 'Major Behaviours' are those which pose an immediate threat to the safe, orderly and secure environment and must be addressed immediately; all other behaviours are deemed 'Minor Behaviours'.

Where appropriate, parents and carers 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
- logical consequences such as moving a student in a classroom or other reasonable and proportionate responses to misbehaviour.
- 'Thinking about my Behaviour' reflection sheet
- withdrawal of privileges
- referral to the year level coordinator (PLT Facilitator)
- restorative practices

- 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:

- Suspensions Policy
- Expulsions Policy
- Restraint and 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.

The principal of North Melbourne Primary 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

North Melbourne Primary School values the input of parents and carers, and we 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/carers have access to our school policies and procedures, available on our school website
- maintaining an open, respectful line of communication between parents/carers and staff, supported by our Communicating with School Staff Policy.
- providing parent/carer 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

North Melbourne Primary School collects 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 are assessed on an annual basis include:

- student survey data
- incidents data- Compass
- school reports
- parent survey
- case management
- CASES21, including attendance and absence data
- Student Online Case System (SOCS)

North Melbourne Primary School also regularly monitors 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. It may be:

- Available publicly on our school's website
- Included in staff induction processes
- Included in transition and enrolment packs
- 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 policies and resources are relevant to this Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy:

- Attendance
- Behaviour - Students
- Child Safe Standards
- Expulsions
- Koorie Education
- LGBTIQA+ Student Support
- Restraint and Seclusion
- Student Engagement
- Students with Disability
- Supporting Students in Out-of-Home Care
- Suspensions

The following school policies are also relevant to this Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy can be found on the North Melbourne Primary School website:

- Action Plan - Aboriginal Learning, Wellbeing and Safety
- Bullying Prevention Policy
- Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy
- Complaints Policy
- Inclusion and Diversity Policy
- Statement of Values and School Philosophy

POLICY REVIEW AND APPROVAL

Policy last reviewed	July 2026
Consultation	Community consultation occurred in July 2026
Approved by	Principal
Next scheduled review date	July 2028