



GRETA VALLEY PRIMARY SCHOOL

Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy



HELP FOR NON-ENGLISH SPEAKERS

If you need help to understand the information in this policy, please contact Greta Valley Primary School on 03 5766 6344 or greta.valley.ps@education.vic.gov.au.

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.

Greta Valley 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.

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POLICY

1. School profile

Greta Valley Primary School opened in 1993 as the result of the merger of the two remaining local schools and following the closure of several others over the preceding years. As a result, the children are all bussed to school from a wide area around the school comprising Greta South, Hansonville, Greta, Greta West, Lurg, Upper Lurg, 15 Mile Creek, Ryan's Creek, Upper Ryans Creek and Molyullah. These far-flung districts support two major centres, Wangaratta and Benalla. Our exit students will complete secondary school at any one of five secondary schools in one of these two locations. Our intake of foundation students each year may have attended any one of nine different kindergartens. Our community is made up of working parents that commute to the larger towns or have local employment or rural businesses. They support four different local fire brigades, several different football teams, churches in several centres and community activities in their own local districts. Many of our families have only met one another through the Greta Valley Primary School. In all other aspects of their daily life, they have a common link with only a section of our wider school community.

The support the school receives from our families is fabulous. They are committed to creating and maintaining the best possible local school they can. Fundraising is enormous with between 10-15% of our cash budget created by locally raised funds. Working bees are very well attended to and our grounds are well maintained and improving every year as a result. Support is evident in classroom programs and curriculum programs such as our outdoor education activities.

Our 2024 enrollment is 23. The students are broken into three cohorts - Foundation/1/2 and Grade 3/4/5/6. Our weekly specialist programs include Italian and Music and fortnightly we have a mobile Art and Library van visit.

Our school has made outdoor education a major feature of its curriculum, with a strong belief that our children benefit enormously from this program. They can practise the very important life skills of persistence, organisation, resilience, getting along and confidence through these activities. Their overall level of fitness is raised, and they are highly engaged in school as a result of the extensive program.

Greta Valley is one of five schools in the King Valley cluster, and we share time together for sport, curriculum enrichment, planning and professional development. Our school is a member of the Ovens and Murray Network which also offers curriculum and professional support, shared planning and professional development. These two avenues of contact with the wider teaching community are very important for our small staff to develop and extend their professional knowledge and support.

1.

2. School values, philosophy and vision

Greta Valley Primary 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 honesty at every opportunity.

Our school's vision is to enable all students to reach their full potential by creating an atmosphere in which positive growth is nurtured and all aspects of development are encouraged. We are proud to provide a safe, happy and caring environment for students.

3. Wellbeing and engagement strategies

Greta Valley 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

- High and consistent expectations of all staff, students and parents and carers
- Prioritising 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
- Delivering a broad curriculum that is tailored to students' interests, strengths and aspirations including Comprehensive use of ICT, Outdoor Education Program, Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden Program, LOTE – Italian, Physical Education, Music, Art, Library and Science.
- Teachers at Greta Valley Primary School use an instructional model 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 Greta Valley 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 support students moving into different stages of their schooling including pre-school.
- Acknowledging positive behaviour and student achievement in the classroom, and formally in school assemblies and communication to parents
- Monitoring student attendance and implement attendance improvement strategies at a whole-school, cohort and individual level

- Students can contribute and provide feedback on decisions about school operations through the Grade 6 Student Leaders. Students are also encouraged to speak with staff including their teachers, Principal, visiting health and wellbeing staff and/or support staff whenever they have any questions or concerns.
- Creating opportunities for cross-age connections amongst students through peer support programs, recess and lunch times as well as whole school activities i.e. Science afternoons.
- All students are encouraged to discuss issues or feel that they may need support of any kind. We are proud to have an 'open door' policy where students and staff are partners in our students' educational journey.
- We engage in school wide positive behaviour support with our staff and students, which includes programs such as Respectful Relationships and the BluEarth program
- Programs, incursions and excursions developed to address issue specific needs or behaviour
- Opportunities for student inclusion i.e. Cooking classes, physical education, music, etc.
- Buddy programs are used to encourage connection between all students. This creates an environment where a range of age groups, personalities and learning abilities join to learn
- 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

- The staff at our school work together to monitor the health and wellbeing of students across all year levels. Classroom teachers act as a point of contact for students who may need additional support
- Koorie students will be 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
- English as a second language students will be supported through our EAL program, and all cultural and linguistically diverse students will be supported to feel safe and included in our school community
- We will support learning and wellbeing outcomes of students from refugee background to engage fully in their education, in a positive learning environment.
- We will 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 will be 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 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
- 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
- Students enrolled under the Department's international student program will be supported in accordance with our legal obligations and Department policy and guidelines at: [International Student Program](#)

Individual

Greta Valley 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 Learning Plan and/or a Behaviour Support Plan when required
- 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
 - Re-engagement programs such as Navigator

Where necessary the school will support the student's family to engage by:

- being responsive and sensitive to changes in the student's circumstances and health and wellbeing
- collaborating, where appropriate and with the support of the student and their family, with any external allied health professionals, services or agencies that are supporting the student
- monitoring individual student attendance and developing an Attendance Improvement Plan in collaboration with the student and their family
- engaging with our regional Koorie Engagement Support Officers
- running regular Student Support Group meetings for all students:
 - with a disability
 - in Out of Home Care
 - with other complex needs that require ongoing support and monitoring.

Quick Links:

- [Student Support Groups](#)
- [Individual Education Plans](#)
- [Behaviour – Students](#)
- [Behaviour Support Plans](#)
- [Student Support Services](#)
- [Program for Students with Disabilities](#)
- [Mental health toolkit](#)
- [headspace](#)
- [Navigator](#)
- [LOOKOUT](#)

4. Identifying students in need of support

Greta Valley Primary School is committed to providing the necessary support to ensure our students are supported intellectually, emotionally and socially. Our Wellbeing team plays a significant role in developing and implementing strategies to help identify students in need of support and enhance student wellbeing. Greta Valley 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, 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 their classroom teacher or the principal.

6. Student behavioural expectations and management

Behavioural expectations of students are grounded in our school's Statement of Values/Student code of conduct.

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.

When a student acts in breach of the behaviour standards of our school community, Greta Valley Primary School will institute a staged response, consistent with the Department's policies on behaviour, discipline and student wellbeing and engagement. Parents/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 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
- 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, 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.

The principal of Greta Valley 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

Greta Valley 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
- 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

Greta Valley 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
- CASES21, including attendance and absence data
- SOCS

Greta Valley Primary School will also regularly monitor 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 (directed to the school website)
- Included in transition and enrolment packs (directed to the school website)
- Included as annual reference in school newsletter (directed to the school website)
- 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 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 and Wellbeing Policy
- Bullying Prevention Policy
- Inclusion and Diversity Policy

POLICY REVIEW AND APPROVAL

Policy last reviewed	05/08/2024
Consultation	School Council
Approved by	Principal
Next scheduled review date	Before 05/08/2026