Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy
2026 - 2028

Help for non-English speakers
If you need help to understand the information in this policy, please contact the Watsonia Heights Primary School Office at (03) 9435 4617.

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.

Watsonia Heights 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.

Contents

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2. School values, philosophy and vision
3. Engagement strategies
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1. School profile

Implementation

Watsonia Heights Primary School is situated in the well-established, north-eastern suburb of Greensborough, in the city of Banyule, sixteen kilometres from Melbourne's CBD. Opening in 1966, the school grew quickly with a peak enrolment in 1970 and in 2026 the school enrolment is 509.

2. School values, philosophy and vision

Vision Statement

Watsonia Heights Primary School has a commitment to providing a safe, caring environment where children are encouraged to develop as individuals to their best ability. It is a school where well-planned programs are provided to engage students and help them maximise learning opportunities and become life-long learners.

Guiding Principles

Watsonia Heights Primary School has a specific emphasis placed on developing each individual child to their maximum potential within a society that is constantly changing by:

- Identifying individual needs
- Giving equal opportunities to every child to achieve success
- Using a range of teaching styles and strategies
- Providing specialist programs across a diverse range of disciplines and interests.

Values

The school motto of "Strive for the Heights" forms our ongoing school focus. If you believe you can achieve! Hence, our values represent the notion to STRIVE!
Our agreed values are:
S – Success – *Our school is focused on ensuring success for each and every child. This is built on the notion that all children can succeed and that success for one child is quite different to that of another. Success takes many forms and is a very personalised concept. Success also relates to team and school success. WHPS is built upon ongoing improvement and, collectively, we work extremely hard for sustained SUCCESS!*
T- Teamwork – *WHPS is a team. Staff, students and parents working together for a collective goal of improvement. This relationship between all stakeholders is imperatively important to securing our effectiveness. We promote a sense of team and a unified approach to 'getting better on purpose'. Relationship development is a highly valued commodity at WHPS. They way we interact and connect with people, learning and life is a focused goal of our school.*
R – Respect – *WHPS develops the notion of respect in what we do! Amongst other things we promote Respect for self, other people, their cultures, individual and collective learning, our physical and global environment. This is a cornerstone of our belief system that promotes empathy and a development of self.*
I – Individuality – *We are committed to improving and enhancing every individual at our school. We focus on providing an individual learning environment that ensures each child is catered for in their ongoing development. EVERYONE counts and EVERYONE is special. We also see ourselves as an individual school working and aligned within a quality education system. WHPS is special in it's endeavours and we provide the highest quality learning environment that is individual in it's uniqueness.*
V – Visionary – *At WHPS we Strive for the Heights! We are visionary in our pursuits and foresight to be 'cutting edge' in our mission and goals. Students and staff are encouraged to set aspirational goals – and to reach them! We have a futuristic vision to education and our high expectations are empowering, realistic and achievable! We can be what choose to be!*
E – Effort – *We promote effort! This value is a lifelong trait that ensures ongoing success for all stakeholders. Whilst we acknowledge, celebrate and nurture achievement we understand the power of effort! People with an instilled work ethic are destined to achieve beyond expectations whilst those with innate skills can relax in self-belief. Effort = excellence!*
Through these values we are able to focus on establishing classroom expectation and learning foci that include:

- *Ensuring students feel safe, connected, respected and valued*
- *Establishing class routines*
- *Getting to know each individual learner and their needs*
- *Building relationships*
- *Develop a shared understanding of the school values and school code of conduct*
- *Understanding the learning process and the components for successful learning*
- *Understanding the brain and how to maximise its use, healthy bodies, healthy diets etc…*

- *Understanding individual learning styles*
- *Goal setting and reflective practices*
- *Learning all about Me!*

3. Wellbeing and Engagement Strategies

Watsonia Heights 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 and school level assessment data*
- *deliver a broad curriculum which incorporates student voice, to ensure that programs are tailored to student interests, strengths and aspirations*
- *teachers at Watsonia Heights 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 STRIVE 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.*
- *students are also encouraged to speak with their teachers Assistant Principal and Principal whenever they have any questions or concerns.*
- *create opportunities for cross—age connections amongst students through the school concert, athletics, music programs and peer support programs such as the prep and 5/6 buddy program.*

- *Weekly lessons around social and emotional learning, in response to student needs, as documented in the scope and sequence for the school wellbeing program*

- *we engage in school wide positive behaviour support with our staff and students, which includes programs*
- *such as:*
  - *School Wide Positive Behaviour Support Program (SWPBS)*
  - *Respectful Relationships*

- *programs, incursions and excursions developed to address issue specific behaviour*
- *opportunities for student inclusion (i.e. sports teams, leadership roles and lunchtime clubs)*
- *Prep – Grade 5 buddy programs.*

- *putting measures 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

Our targeted strategies to address particular groups of students or concerns in certain age groups or friendship circles include:

• all students are aware that they can seek out advice or support from any member of staff at Watsonia Heights Primary School
• supporting Koorie students 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 [insert name of any other school documentation you have in place outlining the school strategies to support Koorie students] for further information
• supporting our English as a second language students through our English as an Additional Language (EAL) program
• providing a positive and respectful learning environment for our students who identify as LGBTIQA+ and following the Department of Education (the department) policy on LGBTIQA+ support https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/lgbtiq-student-support/policy
• supporting all students in Out of Home Care 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
• supporting students with a disability 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
• ensuring wellbeing and health staff 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 applying a trauma-informed approach to working with students who have experienced trauma.

Individual

Watsonia Heights 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*
- *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 The Orange Door .*
- *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 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:
  - *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

Watsonia Heights Primary School is highly committed to the wellbeing of each of our students. At Watsonia Heights Primary School, we provide a consistent and well-thought approach to supporting the intellectual, social and

emotional wellbeing of our students. The Wellbeing team plays a significant role in developing the scope and sequence for a whole school approach to wellbeing. The Wellbeing team have identified strategies to help identify students in need of support. Watsonia Heights 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, including information gathered from early childhood services*
- *observations by school staff such as changes in engagement, behaviour, self-care, social connectedness and motivation*
- *attendance records*
- *academic performance*
- *reflection sheet and suspension data as collated on Compass*
- *engagement with families*
- *self-referrals or referrals from peers*
- *where a student has transferred from another school, previous school reports and handover information received from parents and school.*

Once students have been identified as in need of additional emotional, social or educational support:

- *Individual Learning Plans and Student Support Group meetings are established with teacher, senior staff and parents.*
- *referrals to internal or external service providers.*

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

6. Student behavioural expectations

At Watsonia Heights Primary School we strive to provide a positive, safe, caring and supportive environment that focuses on the needs and emotional well-being of all students. We provide a stimulating learning environment in which students accept increasing responsibility for their own learning and actions.

Our Student Code of Conduct and welfare management practices, based on DE (Department of Education) guidelines, aims to foster a whole school climate where personal responsibility and self-discipline are developed. Parents have an obligation to support the school in its efforts to implement the Student Code of Conduct in a fair and consistent manner. Students, staff and parents have a clear understanding of the school's policies, expectations, rights and responsibilities and rules, all of which reflect the School Values. Students are empowered to assess their own behaviour and develop

strategies to act in a responsible manner. They look at how their learning is going to make a difference and how it will affect other people.

At Watsonia Heights Primary School the school values form the base of the Student Code of Conduct. The school values are: Success, Teamwork, Respect, Individuality, Visionary & Effort.

Watsonia Heights Primary School demonstrates respect, tolerance and cooperation through our daily interactions, being respectful of others regardless of culture, gender, race or religion, thinking first before acting, listening to and valuing other people's opinions. The right to be treated and valued as an individual and the responsibility to value others.

The students at Watsonia Heights Primary School recognise the social responsibility to be courteous and thoughtful. They acknowledge the right to work and play in a safe, secure environment without interference or disturbance. Being able to develop an appreciation for the things we do at school, having fun and being positive and enthusiastic and to be treated in a fair and compassionate manner. Our School fosters high expectations in children, completing work to the best of their ability, putting in effort, being organised, developing persistence and adopting a 'I can do it' approach to their learning. Our students accept challenges and face complicated tasks with a positive growth mindset.

Our school adopts a positive approach to behaviour management which fosters a school climate within which personal responsibility and self-discipline are encouraged and developed through the following strategies:

- giving constant reinforcement of appropriate behaviour, eg. Student of the Week, class rewards recognising and celebrating individual and group efforts and achievement
- improving self-esteem and confidence
- encouraging acceptance and friendship within the school community, eg. Friendship seats
- developing pride in the school
- fostering personal pride in hygiene, dress, punctuality and work presentation
- developing mutual respect whilst acknowledging differences
- encouraging sharing, tolerance and compassion amongst all children
- enhancing open communication between ALL members of the school community
- encouraging organised and responsible play within our playground.
- encouraging team games with a focus on fair play and decision making
- involving and encouraging decision making through the Junior School Council, Leadership Program
- striving for merit and equity of opportunity
- developing a united approach to wellbeing and discipline
- being actively involved with the children - making a special effort to observe, assist and involve children to resolve difficulties
- applying logical forms of discipline, consistently and fairly
- following Watsonia Heights Primary School's Sch School Wide Positive Behaviour Support Program (SWPBS) approach to positive behaviour management. Please refer to the school's website for further information on the SWPBS program.

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 Watsonia Heights 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

Watsonia Heights 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 (school council, feedback opportunities)
- coordinating resources and services from the community for families
- including families in Student Support Groups, and developing individual plans for students
- providing opportunities for families to seek feedback and updates regarding their child's wellbeing and growth (touching base and being present at pick up time, parent teacher interviews, ILP meetings, student led conferences, reports, etc.).

8. Evaluation

Watsonia Heights 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
- Student Online Case System (SOCS)

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

Additional Department of Education and Training Guidelines

All policies and our vision statement can be viewed at:

https://www.watsoniaheightsps.vic.edu.au

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

Policy Review and Approval	
Policy last reviewed	September 2026
Consultation	School Council was consulted regarding this policy on 7 September 2026
Approved by	Tony Ryan (Principal) on 7 September 2026.
Next scheduled review date	September 2028