

# Student Engagement Policy Brighton Primary School 1542

## Purpose of this policy

The purpose of this Student Engagement Policy is to:

- Articulate the expectations and aspirations of the school community in relation to student engagement, attendance and behaviour
- Support the rights and outline the expectations of every member of the school community to engage in and promote a safe, supportive and inclusive educational environment
- Explain the definition of bullying so that there is shared understanding amongst all members of the Brighton Primary School (BPS) community
- Make it clear that no form of bullying at BPS will be tolerated
- Outline the strategies and programs in place at BPS to build a positive school culture and prevent bullying behaviour.

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The implementation of the Student Engagement Policy is a shared responsibility between school, home and the school community. This policy is divided into the following sections that outline the way in which the BPS community seeks to achieve the purpose of this policy.

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### **1. School Profile**

Information about the school profile can be accessed on the Brighton Primary School website.

<http://www.brighton.vic.edu.au/>

The programs of, and teaching in, a school must support and promote the principles and practice of Australian democracy.

Brighton Primary School is committed to the six democratic principles identified in Schedule 4 of the Education and Training Reform Regulations 2017.

These include a commitment to:

- a. Elected government; and
- b. The rule of law; and
- c. Equal rights for all before the law; and
- d. Freedom of religion; and
- e. Freedom of speech and association; and
- f. The values of openness and tolerance.

## **2. School Mission and Vision**

As an internationally minded school, our reputation stands on honouring our history, focusing on the present and preparing for the future. We believe that the growth of our children is at the heart of our community. By focusing on the whole child, we facilitate a sense of belonging and achievement through powerful interactions with other learners through rich learning tasks. Our school culture of shared responsibility and collaboration ensures that the Hearing Unit functions as an integral part of the school community, supporting students to fully access mainstream education. We value our colleagues as reflective educators who are open to new ideas and focused on best practice as they educate our students to develop as critical thinkers and lifelong learners. We are committed to highly effective learning and teaching which is built on relational trust. We have positioned ourselves globally through our membership of Council of International Schools (CIS) and International Baccalaureate (IB) Primary Years Program (PYP) ensuring we develop global citizens.

Brighton Primary is a community of:

- Critical thinkers
  - Interactive learners
  - Global citizens
- Think. Act. Become.

## **3. Engagement Strategies**

The foundation of our positive school culture is the active participation of all members of the school community so they feel valued, safe and secure; are provided with meaningful opportunities to contribute to the school; and have every opportunity to meet their personal and educational potential.

BPS's focus is the teaching of positive behaviours that are embodied in the IB Learner Profile. This is achieved through richly designed Units of Inquiry and weekly class 'Circles.' The focus is on the collective good with the common understanding that every teacher is responsible for every student at Brighton Primary School. Our focus is on the use of Restorative Practices with logical consequences to address appropriate and inappropriate behaviour.

The Brighton Primary School Council and leadership team regularly engage with students, parents/carers, support organisations and the broader community to ensure we are responsive to students' social, emotional, cognitive and cultural needs.

Through the PYP and the Junior School Council, student agency is acknowledged in the planning and delivery of curriculum. There is a student leadership program and significant rite of passage celebrated as students' progress through the school:

- Kindergarten to Prep transition
- Prep 100 day celebrations
- Grade 3 and 4 Film Festival alternate years to the musical production
- Grade 4 and 5 musical production alternate years
- Grade 6 Exhibition, Leadership Program

- Whole school transition program in November.

BPS continues to build on the opportunities for our students to take on meaningful responsibilities both within the school and the broader community.

Our positive school culture is also predicated on student engagement being the basis for learning. To support this, the school leadership team is actively engaged in developing effective classroom practice to ensure that our pedagogy and curriculum engages all students by recognising and responding to their diverse individual learning needs. A professional learning community of life-long learners facilitates the building of respectful relationships, a deep understanding of pedagogy and improved teaching and learning practice. An inclusive and engaging curriculum incorporating the PYP, CIS and Victorian Curriculum ensures that teaching and learning practice is in line with the needs of 21<sup>st</sup> century learners.

### Engagement Programs

#### Inclusion and Transition

At BPS we work together as a whole school community to ensure a preventative school culture by providing programs and practices including the Student Leadership Teams, a whole school Buddy Program, a comprehensive Kindergarten to Prep Transition Program, Learning Support, School Captains, Student Led Assembly, Junior School Council, a Student Wellbeing Team, Oz Child psychologist and DET Student Support Officer.

#### Physical Wellbeing

Brighton Primary School has a proactive approach to student health with the continued provision of a full-time school nurse and level 2 first aid trained staff. In addition, staff is trained annually in the management and treatment of asthma and anaphylaxis.

#### Sunsmart School.

The school promotes sun smart behaviours with the wearing of hats for all outside activities from September to the end of April.

#### Parent Participation

Parent participation is important and we are continually reviewing our Parent Participation Policy, in line with current research on home school partnerships and its impact on student learning and engagement. Parents are invited to attend Classroom Helper Courses onsite to support working with students in the classrooms. Additionally, parents are able to support classroom teachers by attending excursions, camps and other school events.

#### Support Services

A close relationship has been established with a number of support agencies including the Bayside Council, Oz Child psychologist, Alfred CYMHS and DET Student Support Service Officers (SSSO) staff who actively contributes as members of the school community.

#### Professional Learning

Teacher professional learning is given high priority at BPS to ensure that teaching and learning approaches are based on deep level pedagogical understanding and are reflective of best practice. Peer Observation and team teaching are opportunities for teachers to learn with, from and on behalf of each other. Improvement to teaching and learning is supported by modelling of best practice, underpinned by current research facilitated by consultants. Ongoing professional learning in DET initiatives and school based priorities will continue to be a focus at BPS.

#### Collaboration and Communication

At Brighton Primary School we have a school wide understanding of the positive impact of parent's involvement in the development of student's behavioural, emotional and cognitive engagement with learning. We foster a collaborative approach with parents through Compass via Weekly Snapshots, student planners, pastoral care interviews, individual learning improvement plan interviews, reports, newsletters, educational forums, parent-teacher interviews, phone calls and student support meetings.

#### **4. Identifying Students in Need of Extra Support**

At BPS we use the following information and tools to identify students in need of extra support:

- Information gathered on enrolment
- Attendance data
- Academic performance
- Classroom observation
- Engagement with the family
- Assessments from other agencies
- Information from other support agencies.

#### **5. Shared Behaviour Expectations**

Our shared expectations are intended to support staff, students and families from a diverse range of backgrounds, communities and experiences.

Refer to Appendix 1: Rights and Responsibilities

#### **6. School Actions**

Each teacher co-creates a class Essential Agreement with the students. The Essential Agreement describes the way students and teachers in the class want to be treated and how everyone will work in the space. It is displayed prominently in the classroom for easy and regular reference.

The Essential Agreement is underpinned by mutual respect.

It is the teachers' and the students' shared responsibility to hold each other accountable to the class Essential Agreement. If students do not meet the Essential Agreement, a consequence will be put in place e.g. losing time at recess or lunch or walking with the teacher on duty.

Students have a responsibility to maintain a safe and orderly learning environment. If a student disrupts others' learning and loses the right to remain in the classroom, they are sent to a swap class.

If a student is having ongoing difficulty settling into the class and understanding routines, the parents will be contacted if the teacher has ongoing concern and meetings will be set up to assist the student.

##### **Appropriate Behaviour**

BPS will acknowledge students who meet the shared expectations outlined in this policy through recognition and encouragement.

##### **Inappropriate Behaviour**

The Restorative Practice approach is used to address student behaviour in various settings and levels to:

- Re-establish significant relationships
- Ensure consequences for misbehaviour are relevant and meaningful
- Foster and develop individual responsibility and empathy.

Refer to Appendix 2: Staged Response to Behaviour Issues

Refer to Appendix 3: Bullying

Refer to Appendix 4: Responding to breaches of Behaviour Expectations

#### **7. Engaging with Families**

At BPS we value parent input 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 Parents Association in our efforts to build a sense of community. We provide an environment that welcomes all parents/carers as partners in the student's learning.

The school will create successful partnerships with parents/carers and families by:

- Publishing the BPS Engagement Policy
- Conducting effective school/home communications
- Providing volunteer opportunities to enable parents/carers to contribute
- Coordinating resources and services from the community for families, students and the school
- Involving families in Student Support Groups
- Conducting the Classroom Helpers Course

## 8. Evaluation

Data will be collected regularly in relation to student engagement and student wellbeing.

Some sources of data may include data from:

- The Attitude to School survey
- School reports
- CASES21
- Compass
- SOCS (Student Online Case System- System for recording, managing and reporting cases for student support services)
- The Parent survey
- Case management work with students.

## 9. Appendices

### Appendix 1: Rights and Responsibilities

BPS and members of the school community follow their legal obligations under relevant legislation including The *Education and Training Reform Act 2006* (Vic), which states that all Victorians, irrespective of the education and training institution they attend, where they live or their social or economic status, should have access to a high quality education.

The Equal Opportunity Act 2010 (Vic) which prohibits discrimination on the basis of protected attributes (characteristics) including race, religion, disability, sex, age, gender identity and sexual orientation.

The *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006* (Vic), which requires public authorities, including government schools and their employees, to act compatibly with human rights and to consider human rights when making decisions and delivering services.

#### **All students have the right to:**

- Learn and socialise without interference or intimidation in a safe and secure environment
- Be treated with respect and fairness as individuals
- Expect a learning program that meets their individual needs
- Express their ideas, feelings and concerns.

#### **All staff have the right to:**

- Expect to be able to work in an atmosphere of order and cooperation,
- Use discretion in the application of rules and consequences,
- Receive respect and support from the school community.

### **All parents have the right to:**

- Know that their children are in a safe, happy learning environment where they are treated fairly and with respect,
- Expect a positive and supportive approach to their child's learning,
- Expect communication and participation in their child's education and learning.

### **All members of the BPS community have a right to:**

- Fully participate in an environment free of discriminatory behaviour including racist, sexist, ability-based, class-based and homophobic forms of harassment, bullying, vilification, violence, intimidation, abuse and exclusion
- Be treated with respect and dignity.
- Feel valued, safe and supported in an environment that encourages freedom of thought and expression.

## **Responsibilities**

### **The School**

#### **Engagement**

The School will:

- Uphold the right of every child to receive an education up to the compulsory age of schooling
- Ensure the school complies with its duty of care obligations to each student as well as its obligations under the Equal Opportunity and Human Rights legislation
- Collaborate with the BPS community to develop policies and procedures consistent with its values and aspirations and DET Guidelines
- Collaborate to identify the diversity of the school community and deliver teaching and learning, educational and co-curricular activities, facilities, student services and community linkages which are inclusive and responsive to student needs.

Teachers at BPS will:

- Develop flexible pedagogical styles to engage different learners
- Deliver curriculum and assessment that challenges and extends students learning
- Develop positive and meaningful relationships with students that promote engagement, wellbeing and learning
- Provide opportunities for student agency in order to develop a positive school culture.

#### **Attendance**

In compliance with departmental procedures school staff will:

- Promote regular attendance by all members of the school community
- Monitor and follow up on absences.

#### **Behaviour**

BPS will support and promote positive behaviours by developing and implementing shared behavioural expectations with the school community which deliver whole-school responses to behavioural issues. All members of the school community are expected to participate in the educational environment with mutual respect. BPS is committed to engaging all students and will only exclude students as a matter of last resort or extreme circumstances.

The school will:

- Work to provide an appropriate and engaging curriculum for all students
- Lead and promote preventative approaches to behavioural issues by incorporating student wellbeing at the centre of school business
- Monitor the profile of behaviour issues at the school and the effectiveness of implemented strategies
- Provide appropriate professional learning opportunities for all staff to build their capacity to promote positive behaviours.

Teachers at BPS will:

- Understand and accept that all children can learn
- Demonstrate a commitment to the home/school partnership
- Use the Student Engagement policy as a basis for negotiating an essential agreement
- Teach students social competencies through curriculum content and pedagogical approaches
- Employ behaviour management strategies that reflect the behaviours expected from students and which focus on supporting positive behaviours
- Build a collegiate atmosphere with other school staff to share strategies and support each other to reflect on one's own behaviour management approach
- Involve appropriate specialist expertise where necessary
- Involve other school personnel where necessary.

## **Students**

### **Engagement**

All students at BPS are expected to:

- Adhere to the classroom essential agreements and school values
- Respect, value and learn from the differences of others
- Show commitment to their learning
- Reflect on and learn from their own experiences.

### **Attendance**

All students are expected to come to school every day that the school is open to students. Students should arrive at each class on time and ready to learn. If students are unable to attend, their parents/carers must provide an explanation to the school.

### **Behaviour**

Students are expected to:

- Support each other's learning by behaving in a way that is respectful and demonstrates the attributes of the IB Learner Profile
- Be considerate and supportive of others
- Demonstrate behaviour and attitudes that support the wellbeing and learning for all and contributes to a positive school environment that is safe, inclusive and happy
- Understand that bullying, including cyber-bullying, violence, property damage, inappropriate language and disrupting the learning of other students is unacceptable.

## **Parents and Carers**

### **Engagement**

Parents/Carers are expected to:

- support the school's efforts to educate young people to live in a diverse world by promoting an understanding and appreciation of diversity in the home
- help the school to provide student-centered programs by providing all relevant information to the school
- actively participate in supporting their child's learning by building a positive relationship with the school through attendance at student parent-teacher meetings, student activities, school celebrations, student support groups and responding to communications including the student dairy/planner in a timely manner

### Attendance

Parents/carers are expected to ensure that enrolment details for their children are correct, that their children attend school regularly and that, when a child is absent from school, parents/carers must advise the school as soon as possible via Compass. For effective student learning it is critical for students to be at school on time and follow instructions.

### Behaviour

Parents/carers should understand the school's behavioural expectations and promote a consistent approach which supports their child's learning and engagement.

### Appendix 2: Staged response to behaviour issues

A Restorative Practice approach is built upon the following key questions:

When things go wrong	When someone has been hurt
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- What happened?</li> <li>- What were you thinking at the time?</li> <li>- What have you thought about since?</li> <li>- Who has been affected by what you have done? In what way?</li> <li>- What do you think you need to do to make things right?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- What did you think when you realized what had happened?</li> <li>- What impact has this incident had on you and others?</li> <li>- What has been the hardest thing for you?</li> <li>- What do you think needs to happen to make things right?</li> </ul>

### A Staged Response

- This approach will be conducted in an informal way for minor incidents and be embedded in classroom teaching and learning.
- Serious incidents will require a more formal Restorative session that may include: a teacher from the Student Wellbeing Team, Team Leader, Learning Specialist, Assistant Principal, Principal, and if necessary, the DET Student Support Officer and all persons affected in the incident. The response will be documented.
- There will be situations where a formal conference involving the before mentioned people: parents, support persons and convener will be required (Student Support Group). Any imposed consequence will be imbedded in the restorative process that requires a response 'that makes things right' in relation to those who have been affected.
- Where a Restorative Approach has previously been conducted and subsequently the behaviour continues, the school will constitute a further Student Support Group to devise strategies and approaches to address the behaviour. This may include intervention from specialist services and external agencies in the local community and the development of an Individual Behaviour Management Plan.

### Appendix 3. Bullying

Bullying is a pattern of behaviour by one person or a group towards others which is designed to hurt, injure, embarrass, upset or cause discomfort.

#### Definition of Bullying

In 2018 the Education Council of the Council of Australian Governments endorsed the following definition of bullying for use by all Australian schools:

*Bullying is an ongoing and deliberate misuse of power in relationships through repeated verbal, physical and/or social behaviour that intends to cause physical, social and/or psychological harm. It can involve an individual or a group misusing their power, or perceived power, over one or more persons who feel unable to stop it from happening.*

*Bullying can happen in person or online, via various digital platforms and devices and it can be obvious (overt) or hidden (covert). Bullying behaviour is repeated, or has the potential to be repeated, over time (for example, through sharing of digital records)*

*Bullying of any form or for any reason can have immediate, medium and long-term effects on those involved, including bystanders. Single incidents and conflict or fights between equals, whether in person or online, are not defined as bullying.*

Bullying has three main features:

- It involves a misuse of power in a relationship
- It is ongoing and repeated, and
- It involves behaviours that can cause harm.

Bullying can be:

1. Direct physical bullying – e.g. hitting, tripping, and pushing or damaging property.
2. Direct verbal bullying – e.g. name calling, insults, homophobic or racist remarks, verbal abuse.
3. Indirect bullying – e.g. spreading rumours, playing nasty jokes to embarrass and humiliate, mimicking, encouraging others to socially exclude a person and/or damaging a person's social reputation or social acceptance.

Cyberbullying is direct or indirect bullying behaviours using digital technology. For example via a mobile device, computers, chat rooms, email, social media, etc. It can be verbal, written and include images, video and/or audio. Please refer to the BPS Acceptable Use Agreement and e Smart Policy.

### Other distressing and inappropriate behaviours

Many distressing and inappropriate behaviours may not constitute bullying even though they are unpleasant. Students who are involved in or who witness any distressing and inappropriate behaviours should report their concerns to school staff and it will be followed-up accordingly.

Mutual conflict involves an argument or disagreement between people with no imbalance of power. In incidents of mutual conflict, generally, both parties are upset and usually both want a resolution to the issue. Unresolved mutual conflict can develop into bullying if one of the parties targets the other repeatedly in retaliation.

Social rejection or dislike is not bullying unless it involves deliberate and repeated attempts to cause distress, exclude or create dislike by others.

Single-episode acts of nastiness or physical aggression are not the same as bullying. However, single episodes of nastiness or physical aggression are not acceptable behaviours at our school and may have serious consequences for students engaging in this behaviour. BPS will use Restorative Practice to guide a response to single episodes of nastiness or physical aggression.

At BPS we have a strong commitment to prevent and minimise bullying in the school. We are committed to the use of a combination of many approaches as we believe there is no one simple strategy to achieve a safe and harmonious environment.

## **Reporting concerns to BPS**

Bullying complaints will be taken seriously and responded to sensitively at our school.

Students who may be experiencing bullying behaviour, or students who have witnessed bullying behaviour, are encouraged to report their concerns to school staff as soon as possible.

Our ability to effectively reduce and eliminate bullying behaviour is greatly affected by students and/or parents and carers reporting concerning behaviour as soon as possible, so that the responses implemented by BPS are timely and appropriate in the circumstances.

We encourage students to speak to a trusted member of staff.

Parents or carers who develop concerns that their child is involved in, or has witnessed bullying behaviour at BPS should contact their child's teacher.

## **Investigations**

When notified of alleged bullying behaviour, school staff are required to:

1. record the details of the allegations; and
2. inform the classroom teacher who may then inform the team leader, student wellbeing team member, or a member of the principal class.

The school is responsible for investigating allegations of bullying in a timely and sensitive manner. To appropriately investigate an allegation of bullying, the school may:

- speak to the those involved in the allegations, including the target/s, the students allegedly engaging in bullying behaviour/s and any witnesses to the incidents
- speak to the parents of the students involved
- speak to the teachers of the students involved
- take detailed notes of all discussions for future reference
- obtain written statements from all or any of the above.

All communications in the course of investigating an allegation of bullying will be managed sensitively. Investigations will be completed as quickly as possible to allow for the behaviours to be addressed in a timely manner.

The objective of completing a thorough investigation into the circumstances of alleged bullying behaviour is to determine the nature of the conduct and the students involved. A thorough understanding of the alleged bullying will inform staff about how to most effectively implement an appropriate response to that behaviour.

Serious bullying, including serious cyberbullying, is a criminal offence and may be referred to Victoria Police. For more information, see: [Brodie's Law](#).

BPS understands the importance of monitoring and following up on the progress of students who have been involved in or affected by bullying behaviour. Where appropriate, school staff will also endeavour to provide parents and carers with updates on the management of bullying incidents.

## **Appendix 4: Responding to breaches of Behaviour Expectations & Bullying**

Inappropriate Behaviour & Bullying may be addressed by:

- Talking to the student and referring them to the shared expectations
- Discussing appropriate behaviours in the classroom
- Contact with parents
- Making changes to the student's learning program to better equip him/her to behave positively
- implementing restorative practices
- Conferencing: apology
- Action to make it right (may include clean up damage to property)
- Asking the student to undertake tasks designed to better equip them to behave positively in the future

- Counselling
- Appropriate behaviours taught and agreed to
- Payment for damage sought.
- Withdraw privileges, e.g. walk with the duty teacher, lose the right to be in the playground
- Withdraw student temporarily from class – swap grade
- Holding Student Support Group meetings
- Giving the student ‘time-out’– gradual reintroduction using a planned response
- Negotiating alternative pathways or settings for student; or as a matter of last resort, suspension or expulsion.
- Creating Individual Behaviour Management Plans in consultation with parents, student and teachers

### **Ongoing Behaviour issues, including challenging behaviours**

Where students exhibit ongoing behaviour patterns as part of staged response, a range of strategies will be used. These may include the following:

- Discussing the behaviour problems and reaching an agreement for future behaviour
- Explicit Teaching of appropriate behaviours
- Monitoring and providing feedback
- Time Out allowing students a “Cooling Off” period
- Withdrawal of a student may be withdrawn from an activity, class– swap grade, camp or excursion due to inappropriate behaviour and or be provided with an alternative educational setting within the school
- Counselling for individuals in order to modify inappropriate behaviour
- Wellbeing /Student Support Group Meeting involving parents/caregivers and/or relevant DET support staff, outside agencies to assist with modifying the behaviour
- Withdrawal from playground will be given to a student for seriously compromising the safety of themselves or others and/or continual misconduct. Parents/caregivers will be informed and a further meeting arranged to discuss behaviour or to draw up a Behavioural Plan (where necessary)
- Suspension & Expulsion: For serious disciplinary measures we follow DET Student Inclusions and Engagement Guidance, developed in response to Ministerial Orders No.184 and 625.

Corporal punishment is prohibited in all Victorian schools.

This policy is to be read in conjunction with the DET School Engagement Policy guidelines  
<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/participation/Pages/studentengagementguidance.aspx>

This policy was last ratified by School Council in August 2019

Review in 2022