



STUDENT WELFARE POLICY

At Wild Cherry School, we are committed to providing a safe and supportive environment for all students. The social, emotional, moral, spiritual and physical wellbeing of the students in our care are of vital importance and integral to their success at school and for their future lives. We commit time and effort to promoting positive relationships and effective ways of dealing with conflict and eliminating bullying behaviour. We are committed to working together with parents, in order to reinforce safety concepts and strategies at home.

THE NATIONAL SAFE SCHOOLS FRAMEWORK

We value the principles of The National Safe Schools Framework as stated below. At Wild Cherry School, we:

- affirm the right of all school community members to feel safe at school
- promote care, respect and cooperation, and value diversity
- implement policies, programs and processes to nurture a safe and supportive school environment
- recognise that quality leadership is an essential element that underpins the creation of a safe and supportive school environment
- develop and implement policies and programs through processes that engage the whole school community
- ensure that roles and responsibilities of all members of the school community in promoting a safe and supportive environment are explicit, clearly understood and disseminated
- recognise the critical importance of briefing new staff and ongoing professional development in creating a safe and supportive school environment
- have a responsibility to provide opportunities for students to learn through the formal curriculum, the knowledge, skills and dispositions needed for positive relationships
- focus on policies that are proactive and oriented towards prevention and intervention
- regularly monitor and evaluate our policies and programs so that evidence-based practice supports decisions and improvements
- take action to protect children from all forms of abuse and neglect

1. Policy Background

1.1 Definition

Student engagement and wellbeing can be defined as three interrelated components: behavioural, emotional and cognitive.

- **Behavioural engagement** refers to students' participation in education, including the academic, social and extracurricular activities of the school.
- **Emotional engagement** encompasses students' emotional reactions in the classroom and in the school. It can be defined as students' sense of belonging or connectedness to the school.
- **Cognitive engagement** relates to students' investment in learning and their intrinsic motivation and self-regulation.

Student engagement has a significant impact on both the quality and opportunity for learning. Since it underpins effective student learning and positive behaviour, it needs to be a community wide responsibility. Lack of engagement can arise through individual, social, emotional or physical factors, related to school, family or community.

Wild Cherry School aims to create a positive school culture to ensure that students feel valued and cared for, have meaningful opportunities to contribute to the school and can effectively engage with their learning. We aim to be inclusive, recognising and responding to the diverse needs of our students, accommodating different learning profiles and rates of learning and intervening early to identify and respond to individual student needs.

Many young people encounter learning difficulty during their school life and need to be supported by targeted strategies. Wild Cherry has established processes to identify and intervene early when an individual student is at risk of disengaging from learning or from school. Our teachers have a responsibility to respond when students experience difficulty with their schooling and will be supported by a whole-school approach to student support.

1.2 Relevant Legislation

- *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006*
- *Disability Discrimination Act 1992*
- *Education and Training Reform Act 2006*
- *Education and Training Reform Regulations 2007*
- *Equal Opportunity Act 1995*
- *Information Privacy Act 2000*

1.3 Background

1.3.1 Creating a Positive School Culture

Wild Cherry aims to create a positive school culture that is fair and respectful. Particular focus is placed on establishing positive and respectful relationships, particularly between teachers and students and establishing a learning community that provides multiple and diverse opportunities for students to experience success.

Positive relationships with teachers are important to students. A key strength of the Steiner pedagogy is its recognition of students as individuals. Wild Cherry acknowledges the diversity of its student population as central to creating a positive and inclusive school culture. Engagement and wellbeing strategies are incorporated into the school ethos and curriculum so students are more likely to attend school and participate in a meaningful way.

1.3.2 Building a Safe and Supportive School Environment

Building a safe and supportive school environment is essential to student engagement and wellbeing. Students can only learn effectively in environments in which they feel safe and supported and where their teachers have high

expectations for their learning. Wild Cherry has developed a range of policies to promote student well-being including Emergency Management etc.

Wild Cherry has also developed a Behaviour Management Policy as a respectful behaviour management system. Teamwork and respect are core values of the school philosophy. Wild Cherry class teachers aim to involve and engage all students, set high expectations, seek feedback from students.

Continuity of class teacher for the primary years minimises student anxiety, increases resilience and ensures students transition successfully between year levels.

1.3.3 Expecting Positive, Supportive and Respectful Relationships that Value Diversity

Wild Cherry is an inclusive school with a strong moral purpose. It is imperative that all staff, students, parents/guardians and members of the whole-school community exhibit positive relationships and value difference, as this supports both a positive school environment and effective classroom learning.

Continuity of classroom teacher over the primary years enables Wild Cherry teachers to better know their students and understand their learning needs. They are able to adapt current pedagogical knowledge and thinking and apply it in different ways, so that each student is engaged in meaningful learning experiences.

Expecting positive and supportive relationships that value diversity between students, their peers, teachers and the whole-school community encourages students to take personal responsibility for participation in their education and enables them to provide support and model positive behaviours to other students. Wild Cherry, through volunteer parental networks, provides multiple opportunities for parents/guardians and members of the broader community to play an active part in the life of the school and the education of their children.

1.3.4 Promoting Pro-Social Values and Behaviours

Promoting and teaching pro-social values and behaviours helps young people to engage with school, their peers, their teachers and their learning. Wild Cherry has clear expectations of individual responsibility to foster positive relationships among students.

Wild Cherry School is working within the Victorian Curriculum to deliver its curriculum to Classes 1 -6 in each of the eight learning areas. The learning area of Personal Development, Health and Physical Education (PDHPE) is particularly relevant to student welfare and applicable to students from Prep through to Class 6. In the context of the PDHPE Learning Area, the school curriculum includes pro-social values and behaviour to enable students to acquire knowledge and skills, value diversity and build a culture of learning, community and engagement.

1.3.5 Encouraging Student Participation

So that students feel valued and empowered, Wild Cherry encourages active and meaningful student participation and provides students with opportunities to contribute and provide feedback to the school. Meaningful involvement of students means input of ideas, opinions, knowledge and experiences throughout education. Wild Cherry aims to provide opportunity for students to become active participants in their education, including involvement in assessment that is age appropriate.

1.3.6 Proactively Engaging with Parents

Wild Cherry encourages the involvement of parents and families. Staff aim to create a welcoming culture for families and together we aim to foster high academic and artistic standards for the children.

Wild Cherry aims to support families to engage in their child's learning and build their capacity as active learners. In providing an environment that welcomes all parents and is responsive to them as partners in learning, we can ensure that the unique experiences and skills of students' families enrich the learning environment and the school community in a holistic way.

Keys to successful partnerships with parents/families include:

- ensuring all parents are aware of the school's *Student Engagement Policy*;
- conducting effective school-to-home and home-to-school communications;
- providing volunteer opportunities to enable parents/guardians to contribute;
- involving families with curriculum-related activities; and
- providing opportunities to enhance parenting knowledge and skills.

1.3.7 Implementing Preventative and Early Intervention Approaches

Wild Cherry's *Student Engagement Policy* includes preventative and early intervention strategies to support student engagement and address individual barriers to learning.

Prevention strategies aim to target the whole school community and are designed to reduce any risk factors that may contribute to attendance or behavioural issues.

Effective early intervention strategies enable early identification of vulnerable students and those at risk of disengagement from school. Early intervention is focused on groups that are at higher risk of harm or disengagement from education, and aims to improve their resilience through effective and appropriate support. Strategies are targeted at students displaying inappropriate coping skills, stress reactions, depressive symptoms and other personal and social vulnerabilities.

A comprehensive understanding of the whole-school community and of the wellbeing and/or learning issues that students may be experiencing provides the foundation for an inclusive and positive school culture.

1.3.8 Linking to the Local Community

Linking with the local community gives schools access to an extended network of community members and professionals and educators who can provide expertise and experience that can build the capacity of schools and teachers to respond to the needs of their students.

Children and young people with a meaningful connection to the broader community tend to be more resilient in the face of problems and stress. Partnerships between schools and community-based service providers involve an acceptance of shared responsibility for addressing common areas of concern and a collaborative approach to developing strategies to reach goals. These partnerships can also provide optimum service delivery for vulnerable students.

2 Student Engagement Policy

Whole-School Prevention Statement

2.1 Prevention Programmes

Literacy and Numeracy

Wild Cherry's teachers monitor all students for learning difficulties. Those found in need may be individual learning plans.

Inclusion, Wellbeing and Transitions

Transition issues at Wild Cherry are minimal due to the extended class teacher period where students keep the same class teacher until Class 6.

Professional Learning

Teachers devote time to "child study". This is an in-depth review, led by the class teacher, of any student.

Support of Positive Behaviour and Relationships

The school seeks involvement of parents in the learning and behaviour of each student by fostering a co-operative approach through reports, class-parent meetings, phone calls and the like.

2.2 Rights and Responsibilities

School Community

Every member of the school community has a right to fully participate in an education environment that is safe, supportive and inclusive and be treated with respect and dignity, free from all forms of discriminatory behaviour, harassment, bullying, vilification, violence, intimidation, abuse and exclusion.

Every member of the school community has a responsibility to participate and contribute to a positive learning environment

Students

All students have the right to learn and socialise without interference or intimidation in a safe and secure environment with the opportunity to offer ideas, opinions, knowledge and experiences of the educational process.

All students have the responsibility to be prepared to learn and explore their full potential while respecting the rights of others.

Staff

All staff have the right to work in an atmosphere of order and co-operation and use their professional discretion to resolve conflicts within the wider framework of school policies and procedures.

All staff have the responsibility to build positive relationships with students as a basis for engagement and learning, to use and manage school resources to create a stimulating, safe and meaningful learning environment and treat all members of the school community with respect, fairness and dignity.

Parents

All parents have the right to know their children are in a safe, happy learning environment where they are treated fairly.

All parents have the responsibility to build positive relationships with members of the school community and ensure students attend school and have the appropriate learning materials.

2.3 Shared Expectations

Wild Cherry has set out shared expectations which are intended to be positive in that they set out what are expected behaviours for our school community. Our shared expectations are intended to support individual students and families that come to our community from a diversity of backgrounds, communities and experiences.

Staff

Staff are expected, within the context of the wider Steiner curriculum and pedagogy, to:

- Ensure the school complies with its duty of care obligations to its students including student wellbeing at the centre of school business.
- Adopt flexible, inclusive teaching styles to engage different learners
- Deliver curriculum and assessment that challenges and extends student learning
- Provide opportunities for student input and engagement into educational processes
- Develop meaningful relationship with students to promote education and well-being
- Negotiate class-based shared expectations of behaviour
- Promote regular attendance by students and follow up absences
- Monitor student behaviour issues and the effectiveness of implemented strategies

Students

Students are expected, within the context of the wider Steiner curriculum and pedagogy, to:

- Take an increasing responsibility for their own learning and participation as members of the whole school community. This involves developing as individual learners who increasingly manage their own learning and growth by setting goals and managing resources to achieve these goals.
- Have high expectations they can learn.
- Participate fully in the school's educational program, including camps and music, and to attend regularly.
- Display positive behaviours that demonstrate respect for themselves, their peers, their teachers and all other members of the school community.
- Understand that bullying, violence, property damage, inappropriate language and disruption of the learning of others is unacceptable.

Parents

Parents of Students are expected, within the context of the wider Steiner curriculum and pedagogy, to:

- Ensure enrolment details for their children are correct
- Ensure their children regularly attend school and to advise the school of absenteeism in a timely manner.
- Promote positive educational outcomes for their children by taking an active interest in their child's educational progress and wellbeing including regular and constructive communication with school staff.
- Actively support their child's engagement in the school environment by attendance at festivals, performances and other student activities.
- Support the school in maintaining a safe and respectful learning environment for all students.
- Work with staff to promote a consistent approach to discipline both in and out of school.

IMPLEMENTATION GUIDELINES

Included below are some of the specific practices and procedures to be followed:

- Staff will participate in ongoing Professional Development and training regarding wellbeing practice
- The values expressed in our philosophy will underpin our relationships and engagement of all stakeholders and our teaching and learning
- A culture of positive reinforcement and encouragement will permeate all facets of our school
- Wild Cherry School will value and encourage individuality, difference and diversity
- The College of Teachers will meet weekly to monitor the needs of individual students and develop plans as required
- Parent education and information will be a focus of the school approach to wellbeing
- Parents are recognized as the first educators of their child and are seen as partners within the school's approach to the students' wellbeing
- Parents will be provided with a copy of this policy and our behavior management policy at enrolment, and it will be discussed as appropriate in the school newsletter and at parent teacher interviews.
- Community partnerships and links will be sought in order to enhance the programs and complement the procedures of the school's practice in relation to a whole school approach to the students' wellbeing
- Specific community services will be accessed to provide support for students and staff, as required