



Student Wellbeing & Engagement Policy



Help for non-English speakers

If you need help to understand the information in this policy please contact GDPS on 5197 7444 or gormandale.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.

Gormandale & District 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

Gormandale & District 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.

This policy applies to all school activities, including camps and excursions.

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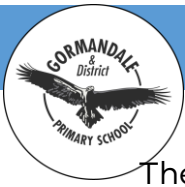
POLICY

1. School profile

Gormandale & District Primary School is a community minded school, set in the picturesque farm setting of Gormandale, in between the larger towns of Traralgon and Yarram. We are a family and community-oriented school serving families in Gormandale and surrounding areas. The school is an amalgamation of 5 small schools that were previously operating in the greater district and merged into one site in 1995. We have a current enrolment of 43 students and operate 3 classrooms Junior (P/1), Middle (2/3/4) and Senior (5/6).

Gormandale is a small town located 22km south-east of Traralgon in the Latrobe Valley and is approximately 2.5hrs east of Melbourne. The town is nestled in the picturesque Merriman's Creek Valley just beyond Loy Yang Power Station. The Hyland Highway runs through Gormandale and leads onto attractions and towns including: Tarra Bulga National Park, Ninety Mile Beach, Yarram, Port Albert and Woodside.

Gormandale is a proud community that is supportive of our local school. There are sporting facilities within the town which cater for football, netball and tennis. There is a very active Community House who maintain a community garden and BBQ area for the town.



The historical Gormandale Mechanics Institute (hall) hosts many activities including Karate for all ages. The hall is utilised by the school for many events throughout the year.

2. School values, philosophy and vision

Gormandale and District Primary School fosters a community learning environment in which each and every member is nurtured to become a confident lifelong learner.

Our school values 'Be Safe, Be Respectful and Be a Learner' underpin everything we do. At GDPS we set out clear, consistent, high expectations. We teach and model these expectations to our students every day and positively acknowledge our students when displaying our values. Our expected behaviours matrix shows students what our values look like in each of our classroom settings.

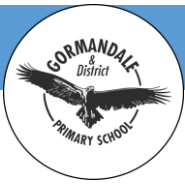
3. Wellbeing and engagement strategies

Gormandale & District 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, student management data and school level assessment data.
- Teachers at Gormandale & District Primary School adopt a broad range of teaching and assessment approaches to effectively respond to the

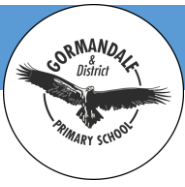


diverse learning styles, strengths and needs of our students and follow the standards set by the Victorian Institute of Teaching.

- Our school's Statement of Values 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 through the Eagle Team and other forums including surveys and student leaders. Students are also encouraged to speak with school staff when they have any questions or concerns.
- All students are welcome to speak with our School Chaplain if they would like to discuss a particular issue or feel as though they may need support of any kind. We are proud to have an 'open door' policy where students and staff are partners in learning.
- We engage in school wide positive behaviour support with our staff and students, which includes programs such as:
 - Respectful Relationships
 - School Wide Positive Behaviours
 - Berry Street Education Model
 - Zones of Regulation
 - URStrong Friendology
- Opportunities for student involvement in sports with the Traralgon Small Schools Cluster.

Targeted

- All students in Out of Home Care are supported in accordance with the Department's policy on [Supporting Students in Out-of-Home Care](#) including being appointed a Learning Mentor, having an Individual Education 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.

- Staff will apply a trauma-informed approach to working with students who have experienced trauma.
- All students are treated as individuals, with their needs catered to as required by individual circumstance.

Individual

- Student Support Groups, see:
<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/participation/pages/supportgroups.aspx>
- Individual Education Plan
- Behaviour Response Planning
- Behaviour Support Plans
- Student Safety Plan
- Student Support Services
- Program for Students with Disabilities
- Referral to Student Support Services
- Referral to Child First, Headspace
- Navigator & Lookout (DET)

Gormandale & District 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 Education 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 ChildFirst
 - Re-engagement programs such as Navigator



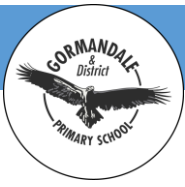
Where necessary the school will support the student's family to engage by:

- 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 Plans in collaboration with the student and their family.
- Running regular Student Support Group meetings for all students:
 - with a disability
 - in Out of Home Care
 - with other complex needs that require ongoing support and monitoring.

4. Identifying students in need of support

Gormandale & District Primary School is committed to providing the necessary support to ensure our students are supported intellectually, emotionally and socially. The principal, teachers and support staff work as a team in developing and implementing strategies help identify students in need of support and enhance student wellbeing. Gormandale & District 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 values apply to the rights and responsibilities of all 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, 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

Behavioural expectations of students, staff and families are grounded in our school values. Student bullying behaviour will be responded to consistently with Gormandale & District Primary School's Bullying policy.

When a student acts in breach of the behaviour standards of our school community, Gormandale & District Primary School will institute a staged response, consistent with the Department's Student Engagement and Inclusion Guidelines. Where appropriate, parents will be informed about the inappropriate behaviour and the disciplinary action taken by teachers and other school staff.

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 they are displaying an unexpected behaviour
- Teacher controlled consequences such as moving a student in a classroom or other reasonable and proportionate responses to misbehaviour
- Withdrawal of privileges
- Restorative practices
- Detentions
- Behaviour reviews
- 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 and Training.

The Principal of Gormandale & District 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

Gormandale & District 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
- Coordinating resources and services from the community for families
- Including families in Student Support Groups, and developing individual plans for students.

8. Evaluation

Gormandale & District 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
- CASES2, including attendance and absence data
- SOCS

Gormandale & District Primary School will also regularly monitor available data dashboards to ensure any wellbeing or engagement issues are acted upon in a timely manner and any intervention occurs as soon as possible.

COMMUNICATION

This policy will be communicated to our school community in the following

- Available publicly on our school's website
- Included in staff induction processes
- 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 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	October 2023
Consultation	Consultation with school community 31.10.2023
Approved by	Principal
Next scheduled review date	2025