

STUDENT WELLBEING AND ENGAGEMENT POLICY

Rossbourne is committed to creating a Child safe organisation through the implementation of the Child Safe Standards as specified in Ministerial Order No. 1359. We will implement strategies, policies, procedures and practices that will comply with the prescribed standards, to ensure the on-going safety of students.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that all students and members of the Rossbourne School community understand:

- our commitment to providing a safe and supportive learning environment for students
- expectations for positive student behaviour
- support available to students and families
- our school's policies and procedures for responding to inappropriate student behaviour.

Rossbourne 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 excursions and camps.

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POLICY

School profile

Rossbourne School was established in 1967 in the Melbourne suburb of Hawthorn. We have 140 students enrolled from Year 7 to 12 and 35 school staff members including a Director of Wellbeing, a Speech Pathologist and Psychologists.

Our school grounds are dominated by the shade of many established trees and plants, and we are surrounded by a supportive community. Our students come from far and wide as we are a unique Special School catering for students whose intellectual capacity is too high to qualify for enrolment at a traditional special school and have found mainstream schools too overwhelming both socially and academically. A significant priority for personal development, is supporting our student to become independent. We support our student to make their own way to and from school. The vast majority of students catch public transport to and from school. Rossbourne School has developed close ties to the local community and enjoys support from our local shops and community services.

Our school is culturally diverse with 25% of families having a language background other than English. We embrace neuro-diversity and all of our students have some level of neuro-development challenge.

We strive to provide a nurturing and challenging environment that empowers students to reach their personal best, both academically and socially.

School Values, Mission and Vision

Rossbourne School: Our Statement of Values, Mission and Vision 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 *diversity, respect, integrity and kindness* at every opportunity.

Engagement strategies

Rossbourne 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 engagement strategies used by Rossbourne School is included below:

Whole School

- 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
- deliver personalised curricular, VCAL to ensure that students are able to choose subjects and programs that are tailored to their interests, strengths and aspirations

- teachers at Rossbourne School use a combination of Explicit Instruction and Inquiry Based Learning frameworks to ensure all students benefit from a common and shared model of pedagogy that is evidenced-based, high yield teaching practices that are incorporated into all lessons
- teachers at Rossbourne 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 Student Representative Council and other forums including year group meetings and Peer Support Groups. Students are also encouraged to speak with their teachers, School Section Leaders, wellbeing staff and the Principal whenever they have any questions or concerns.
- create opportunities for cross—age connections amongst students through school plays, athletics, music programs and peer support programs
- All students are welcome to self-refer to the Director of Wellbeing, wellbeing staff, School Section Leaders and the Principal 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
 - Bully Stoppers
 - Safe Schools
- programs, incursions and excursions developed to address issue specific behaviour (e.g. self-regulation and social skills programs)
- opportunities for student inclusion (e.g. sports teams, clubs, recess and lunchtime activities)
- buddy programs, peers support programs

Targeted

- each year group has a School Section Leader and Homeroom teacher responsible for their year, who monitor the health and wellbeing of students in their year, and act as a point of contact for students who may need additional support
- all student have Individual Learning Plans
- all students from Senior School students will be assisted to develop a Career Action Plan, with targeted goals and support to plan for their future
- connect all Koorie students with a Koorie Engagement Support Officer
- all students in Out of Home Care will be appointed a Learning Mentor, have an Individual Learning Plan and will be referred to Student Wellbeing for an Educational Needs Assessment
- Rossbourne School assists students to plan their Year 10 and 11 work experience, supported by the Pathways Co-ordinator

- 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

Individual

The following are student specific strategies that may be considered and applied on a case by case basis.

- Student Support Groups, see: www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/participation/pages/supportgroups.aspx
- Multi-discipline student wellbeing team meetings that focus on intervention actions for individual students
- Individual Learning Plan and Behaviour Support Plan
- Program for Students with Disabilities
- referral to Wellbeing staff
- referral to ChildFirst, Headspace
- Navigator
- Lookout

Rossbourne 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
 - 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 required 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
 - and with other complex needs that require ongoing support and monitoring.

Rossbourne School is committed to providing the necessary support to ensure our students are supported academically, emotionally and socially. The Student Wellbeing team plays a significant role in developing and implementing strategies that help identify students in need of support and enhance student wellbeing. Rossbourne 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
- parent or staff referrals

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, 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.

Student behavioural expectations

Behavioural expectations of students, staff and families are grounded in our school's Statement of Values and School Philosophy. Student bullying behaviour will be responded to consistently with the school's Bullying Prevention policy.

When a student acts in breach of the behaviour standards of our school community, Rossbourne School will institute a staged response, consistent with the school's *Student Behaviour Management and Discipline Policy*. 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 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
- referral to the School Section Leader
- restorative practices
- detentions
- behaviour reviews
- suspension and or expulsion

Suspension and expulsion are measures of last resort and may only be used in particular situations consistent with *Rossbourne School: Statement of Values and School Philosophy and Exclusion from School Policy*.

Corporal punishment is prohibited in our school and will not be used in any circumstance.

Engaging with families

Rossbourne 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
- seeking feedback and input from families to help inform school decision making
- coordinating resources and services from the community for families
- including families in Student Support Groups, and developing individual plans for students.

Evaluation

Rossbourne 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

See Rossbourne School policies and procedures including:

- Bullying Prevention
- Care, Safety and Welfare of Students (Restrictive Interventions)
- Exclusion from School
- Statement of Values and School Philosophy
- Student Wellbeing and Engagement
- Students Running away from School

This policy will be reviewed as part of the Rossbourne School review cycle.

Ratified by Rossbourne School Council: 11 November 2020

January 2023