



# STUDENT WELLBEING & ENGAGEMENT POLICY



## Help for non-English speakers

If you need help to understand the information in this policy please contact Golden Square Primary School 03 5443 6877

## 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, supportive and inclusive 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.

Golden Square 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.

## SCOPE

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

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2. School values, philosophy and vision

3. Wellbeing and engagement strategies
4. Identifying students in need of support
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## Policy

### 1. School Profile

Golden Square Primary School is a result of a merger between two primary schools in the suburb which were commonly referred to as Maple Street and Laurel Street Primary schools. While the new building was being constructed on the Maple Street site, the school combined at Laurel Street. In June 2015 the doors of the new school were opened and the final stage of the merger was complete.

Golden Square Primary School is located 132 kms north of Melbourne. The school is closely located to the local Golden Square shopping centre and local sporting facilities. There is limited room for future land developments and our school neighbourhood boundary was reduced in 2019.

We have approximately 300 students enrolled from Prep to Grade 6 and 36 school staff members including: 2 principal class employees, 4 Learning Specialists, and 1 Lead Teacher who is the Mental Health & Wellbeing Leader within our school.

We are starting to see greater cultural diversity in our student population as the city of Bendigo becomes a chosen place for families relocating to Australia. The school is seeking to establish stronger understandings and celebrations of cultural diversity including those of our First Nation people.

Golden Square Primary School strives to create an inclusive school community and is wanting to increase the engagement of parents and carers in their children's learning.

### 2. School Values, Philosophy and Vision

Golden Square Primary School's *Statement of Values and School Philosophy* 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 achievement, community, resilience and respect at every opportunity.

#### **Mission**

To engage all children in a high-quality education where they will thrive in their social, emotional and academic journey.

#### **Vision**

Our Golden Square Primary School community will work collaboratively in a safe, kind and respectful environment that inspires a passion and curiosity for learning.

Our *Statement of Values and School Philosophy* is available online at: <https://www.gsquareps.vic.edu.au>

### 3. Wellbeing and Engagement Strategies

Golden Square Primary School is continuing to develop 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. We also acknowledge that the support provided will continue to change over time as we engage in new learning that allows us to expand our professional knowledge and practices.

A summary of the universal (whole of school), targeted (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 and that embraces and celebrates diversity and empowers all students to participate and feel valued.
- 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, Parents/Carers Opinion Survey data, student behavioural data and school level assessment data
- teachers at Golden Square Primary School are implementing evidence-based high impact teaching strategies within an instructional framework to ensure an explicit, common and shared model of instruction. This framework enables us 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 and School Philosophy* are incorporated into our curriculum and promoted to students, staff and parents/carers 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 regularly recognised throughout the day and celebrated formally at school assemblies and communicated to parents/carers in various ways.
- monitor student attendance and implement attendance improvement strategies at a whole-school, cohort and individual level
- the value of student voice is recognised and we are working with our students to provide authentic opportunities and platforms so that engagement in learning is enhanced.
- create opportunities for cross—age connections amongst students through school plays, athletics, performing arts programs and peer support programs
- all students are welcome to seek assistance from their classroom teachers, our Mental Health & Wellbeing Leader, Assistant Principal and Principal if they would like to discuss a particular issue or feel as though they may need support of any kind.

- we continue to develop and implement the School Wide Positive Behaviour Support framework.
- we explicitly and implicitly model and teach Respectful Relationships
- opportunities for students to promote positive social interactions through a variety of activities (i.e. recess and lunchtime activities, sports teams, clubs, student led events)
- we actively encourage inclusive practices from all members of our community

### **Targeted**

- engagement with our Koorie Engagement Support Officer to develop an environment that is culturally inclusive for our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and their families.
- engagement with our Koorie Engagement Support Officer to assist in the building of relationships with families based on respect and trust.
- all students who identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islanders will have an Individual Education Plan
- 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.
- staff will undertake specific health training required to ensure that children with specific medical conditions are able to have their health needs met
- 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 implementing the learning from our involvement in the *Berry Street Education Model* training.
- EAL students will be supported by our engagement in the *Greater Bendigo EAL Cluster* and the appointed *Cluster Coordinator*.

### **Individual**

- The building of constructive relationships with students at risk or students who are vulnerable due to complex individual circumstances.
- Meetings with students and their parent/carer to talk about how best to help the student engage with school.
- Developing an Individual Learning Plan, and/or Behaviour Support Plan, and/or Safety Plan as required.
- Considering reasonable adjustments that could be made and implementing these adjustments accordingly.
- 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 Plan* 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:
  - who are identified through the outcome of a Disability Inclusion Profile meeting as requiring Tier 3 support
  - in Out of Home Care
  - with other complex needs that require ongoing support and monitoring.

#### **4. Identifying students in need of support**

Golden Square Primary School is committed to providing the necessary support to ensure our students are supported intellectually, emotionally and socially. The Student Wellbeing team plays a significant role in developing and implementing strategies to help identify students in need of support and enhance student wellbeing. Golden Square Primary School will utilize 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 throughout the enrolment.
- attendance records
- academic performance
- observations by school staff such as changes in engagement, behaviour, self-care, social connectedness and motivation
- data from the implementation of SWPBS including suspension data
- the knowledge shared from families about their children
- self-referrals, referrals from peers and families
- referrals from allied health professionals
- the learning opportunities provided through programs such as Respectful Relationships
- information recorded from parent/carer meetings, SSGs and chronicles from Compass

#### **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 and School Philosophy* 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 respectfully and honestly

Students have the responsibility to:

- participate fully in their educational program
- respect the right of others to learn
- display positive behaviours that demonstrate respect for themselves, their peers, their teachers and members of the school community
- speak up about bullying, harassment, violence discrimination or intimidation
- display positive behaviours that align with the behaviours detailed in our *Expectations Matrix*.

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 rights and responsibilities**

Behavioural expectations of students, staff and families are grounded in our school's *Statement of Values and School Philosophy*.

Violence, bullying, and other offensive and harmful behaviors such as racism, harassment and discrimination will not be tolerated and will be managed in accordance with this policy. Bullying will be managed in accordance with our Bullying Prevention Policy.

The School Wide Positive Behaviour Supports *Expectations Matrix* outlines acceptable behaviours that are reflective of our school's values. This framework will also support students in their understanding and learning of these expectations in a manner that is appropriate to their developmental stage.

When a student acts in breach of the behaviour standards of our school community, Golden Square Primary School will institute a staged response consistent with the Department's policies on behaviour, discipline and student wellbeing and engagement. Where appropriate, parents/carers will be informed about the inappropriate behaviour and the disciplinary action taken by teachers and other school staff.

Our school considers, explores and implements positive and non-punitive interventions to support student behaviour before considering disciplinary measures such as in-school suspensions, external suspensions, or being excluded from certain formal or informal activities or events such as regular play time, incursions, excursions and camps.

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 Team Leaders or teacher members of the Leadership Team

- engagement in restorative practices
- behaviours support and intervention meetings with parents/carers/guardians.
- completion of school day earlier than scheduled time
- suspension
- expulsion

Suspension, expulsion and restrictive interventions are measures of last resort and may only be used in situation 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 Golden Square 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

Golden Square 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 by *working as one* in the following ways. We do this by:

- Ensuring that there is easy access to relevant school policies and procedures
- maintaining an open, respectful line of communication between parents/carers and staff.
- providing parent volunteer opportunities so that families can contribute to school activities
- involving and informing families about how to support the learning of their child at home
- involving families in school decision making as appropriate
- linking families to external services within the community
- including families in Student Support Groups, and the development of Individual Education Plans for students.

## 8. Evaluation

Golden Square Primary School will collect data 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
- chronicle entries on Compass
- Child Safe reports (mandatory reporting)
- Transition Information Reports from kindergartens
- school reports



- parent survey
- CASES21 including attendance data
- Student Online Cases System (SOCS)

## FURTHER INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

- [Bullying Prevention Policy](#)
- [Child Safe Statement of Commitment](#)
- [Child Safe Code of Conduct](#)
- [Child Safe Responding and Reporting Obligations \(including Mandatory Reporting\)](#)
- [Respect for School Staff](#)
- [Statement of Values and School Philosophy](#)

## POLICY REVIEW AND APPROVAL

**Policy last reviewed:** 20<sup>th</sup> October 2023

**Consultation:** Ongoing Consultation – available via school website

**Approved by:** This policy was presented to School Council for **noting** at the meeting held on 26th October 2023.

**Next scheduled review date:** This policy is scheduled for review on 19<sup>th</sup> October, 2025.