

# Thomastown Meadows Primary School

## STUDENT ENGAGEMENT POLICY

### Definition

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

Behavioural engagement refers to the 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.

### Rationale

Students can reach their full potential only when they are happy, healthy and safe, and when there is a positive school culture to engage and support them in their learning. Student engagement and school connectedness underpin effective student learning and positive behaviour.

- Thomastown Meadows, in its commitment to promoting and protecting the interests and safety of children, have a **zero tolerance for child abuse**. The school is committed to providing an environment where children are safe, feel safe and their voices are heard about decisions affecting their lives. The school is committed to providing an environment where children are safe, feel safe and their voices are heard about decisions affecting their lives.

Everyone involved with Thomastown Meadows is responsible for the care and protection of children and the reporting of child abuse. Child abuse includes:

- (a) Any act committed against a child involving-
  - (i) A sexual offence; or
  - (ii) An offence under section 49B(2) of the **Crimes Act 1958** (grooming);
- (b) The infliction, on a child of-
  - (i) Physical violence; or
  - (ii) Serious emotional or psychological harm; and
- (c) Serious neglect of a child

### Goals

To ensure that student engagement and wellbeing are a whole school priority.

To create a school culture and environment that:

TMPS is committed to promoting and protecting the interests and safety of children by providing an environment where children are safe, feel safe and their voices are heard.

- Is safe and supportive
  - Exhibits respectful relationships and values diversity
  - Promotes pro-social values and behaviours
  - Encourages student participation and student voice
  - Proactively engages parents/carers
  - Implements preventative and early intervention approaches
  - Responds to individual students
  - Values links to the wider community
- in order for students to reach their full potential.

## **Implementation**

1. Student engagement and wellbeing programs and policies will reflect a detailed understanding of the diversity of the student population and school community. The School Profile Statement outlines the issues in regard to diversity at TMPS. (See Profile Statement Appendix A)
2. Programs and strategies to promote student engagement, high attendance and positive behaviours will be planned and implemented. (See the Whole School Prevention Statement - Appendix B)
3. Every member of the school community has a right to fully participate in an educational environment that is safe, supportive and inclusive and to be treated with respect and dignity. TMPS community will abide by a statement of Rights and Responsibilities that is agreed on and applicable to all students, teachers and parents/carers. (See Statement of Rights and Responsibilities – Appendix C)
4. High expectations for the whole school community will be a guiding principle. (See Shared Expectations - Appendix D)
5. School actions and consequences will be incremental, applied fairly and consistently with an emphasis on fostering positive relationships with an educational role.

(See Actions and Consequences - Appendix E)

## **Evaluation**

This policy will be evaluated as required.

This policy was last ratified by School Council in....

October 2016

## **Appendix A**

### **School Profile Statement**

Thomastown Meadows PS was established in 1980. The core plus building houses excellent facilities consisting of a library/information communications technology room, art-craft room and general purpose room. There are seventeen air-conditioned, computer enhanced classrooms and a science room. All classrooms have interactive whiteboards. The school grounds include three age appropriate playgrounds, a large grassed oval and asphalt play areas.

At TMPS a very high proportion of students at the school are from lower socio-economic households and from families where a language other than English is spoken. Many languages are represented. The school is committed to working inclusively with this diverse multi-cultural aspect of the school population. Some of the ways that the school has taken toward working inclusively include employing a Multi-cultural Aides (Arabic and Vietnamese), translation of school documents and use of interpreters at parent/teacher interviews and other meetings.

The school aims to provide an environment that engages and stimulates students to become life long learners with the academic, social and personal skills needed to become productive members of their society. Carefully planned and targeted programs are designed to meet the needs of all students. Learning Improvement Plans are written for students as needed. Specialist programs include, visual arts, physical education and science. As of 2017 we will have a one to one ipad program. A variety of extra -curricular programs are offered including the camping program and keyboard lessons.

Health and wellbeing has been a priority area at TMPS over a period of time with goals in past Charters and the present Strategic Plan. The school has set goals to provide educational opportunities that cater for all students' needs through a values and personal skills framework (You Can Do It and the Bounce Back). The importance of a safe and well equipped school and attractive physical environment has supported the goals of providing a tolerant and welcoming school. The development of personal and social skills and a positive approach to learning have been important.

Regular attendance and punctuality are crucial to the students at TMPS. They both allow students to maximise their full educational potential. Students who are regularly absent from school are at risk of missing out on fundamental aspects of their educational and social development. The Primary Welfare Officer regularly analyses data and implements programs each year to maintain and improve student attendance and punctuality. She is supported by staff, guided by the Attendance Policy.

The right to work and play in a secure environment where the rights of others are respected is fundamental to the TMPS community. An orderly and cooperative environment is necessary for our students to reach their full potential socially, emotionally and intellectually and to feel connected to school. A Student Code of Conduct based on these principles and outlining standards for student behaviour and consequences is crucial for developing this environment.

Transition Programs have been crucial to supporting students to feel safe and connected to the school. Prep and Grade 6 Transition Programs have been thorough and well supported. Internal transitions and transitions for new students into the school complement these programs.

The school consistently has a number of students funded under the Program for Students with Disability (PSD). The number of students funded under this program fluctuates from year to year. PSD funded students are supported in their learning by Integration Aides who work with them.

TMPS is committed to promoting and protecting the interests and safety of children by providing an environment where children are safe, feel safe and their voices are heard.

## **Appendix B**

### **Whole School Prevention Statement**

#### **Creating a Positive School culture**

The school values of respect, resilience, confidence, cooperation and honesty are the basis for developing a positive school culture. There is an emphasis on establishing positive and respectful relationships between teachers, staff and students. At TMPS we value the diversity of our student and community population. We provide multiple opportunities for students to experience success.

Teachers at TMPS strive to make their classrooms vibrant and active learning environments in which stimulating teaching strategies are designed to maximize student interest and learning opportunities. We believe in developing the whole child and implement programs for achievement and social-emotional wellbeing in school.

#### **Building a safe and supportive school environment**

The Student Code of Conduct Policy aims to develop positive pro-social behaviours and relationships between school community members. It aims to ensure that students feel secure and safe at school. A Restorative Justice approach is used by teachers in conjunction with the Student Code of Conduct. Teachers have high expectations of students and provide appropriate and stimulating curriculum programs.

As educators, staff endeavour to cater for the needs of all children, assisting them in the development of knowledge, skills and attitudes and fostering in them a desire to become responsible adults. Transition programs including Kinder to Prep, Grade 6 to Year 7 and internal transitions between grade levels also ensure students feel supported and prepared.

#### **Expecting positive, supportive and respectful relationships that value diversity**

To be effective, schools need to support positive relationships and value diversity. Many policies and programs support this at TMPS. These include The Child safe Standards, Anti-Bullying, Anti- Harassment, Community Grievance, Complaints Resolution, Workplace Bullying and the Equal Opportunity.

#### **Promoting Pro-social behaviours**

Promoting pro-social behaviours assist students to engage with the school. The Values Program, "You Can Do It", is taught on a weekly basis to Foundation to year 2 and teaches students the foundations of resilience, getting along, confidence, persistence and organisation, necessary to become successful adults. The Year 3 -6 participate in the bounce back program on a weekly basis. At the beginning of every term teachers revisit the Student Code of Conduct. Teachers implement a Start Up Program at the beginning of each year that involves students in developing the Rights and Responsibilities, needed to maintain well run classrooms where students feel safe and supported.

Teachers implement the Behaviour Management strategies as outlined by Ramon Lewis which encourage the development of Classroom Rights and Responsibilities and a communal approach to ensuring appropriate behaviour. Staff at TMPS expect a high standard of behaviour from all students. Every effort is made to reinforce positive behaviour and modify inappropriate behaviours.

#### **Encouraging student participation**

Providing all students with opportunities to contribute and provide feedback to the school ensures they feel valued and empowered. The Junior School Council provides this opportunity. Students also have opportunities to give feedback through reflection journals and the Attitudes to School Survey.

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### **Proactively engaging with parents/carers**

The partnership of parents/carers and teachers is essential to the life and learning at TMPS. Many opportunities for community members to play an active role are provided and valued. These include the School Council, the Parent Association, volunteers in classrooms and on excursions, Family Maths Nights, Parent/Teacher Interviews, Book Fair, School Banking, Working Bees, School Concert and School Art Show.

The Primary Welfare Officer engages with and provides support to parents and families. Parents are given the opportunity to increase their knowledge and skills through information nights such as the Foundation Orientation Evening and Camp Information sessions. The Homework Policy outlines how parents can assist their child at home.

### **Implementing preventative and early intervention approaches**

The early identification of vulnerable students and those at risk of disengaging is important. The Primary Welfare Officer monitors attendance and provides support and intervention as outlined in the Attendance Policy. Social Skills programs, anger management programs, grief counselling and other support programs are provided as necessary. Attendance at sick bay, time away incidents and other data is recorded and analysed to inform planning and future policy making.

### **Responding to individual students**

Processes are in place to respond to individual students who require additional support and assistance. Learning Improvement Plans and Behaviour Management Plans are written and used to support students at risk. Student Services personnel are engaged to assess and support when students present with needs in social, emotional or academic areas. Behavioural incidents are recorded and analysed. Reading and Maths Intervention Programs are provided at the Foundation, Grade 1 and Grade 2 levels.

### **Linking to the local community**

TMPS understands that highly effective school-community partnerships can have a positive impact on benefits for students, with every effort being made to build those partnerships. TMPS is involved with the Thomastown cluster in the Linking Learning Project.

## **Appendix C**

### **Rights and Responsibilities**

- Every member of the school community has the right to fully participate in an educational environment that is safe, supportive and inclusive and the responsibility to ensure that others have the right to participation in such an environment.
- Every member of the school community deserves to be treated with respect and dignity and has the responsibility to treat others with respect and dignity.
- All members of the school community have the right to be accepted equally regardless of race, gender, religious or political convictions or impairments because of disability or age and the responsibility to accept others equally.
- All members of the school community have the right to be considered free and equal in dignity and the responsibility to consider others free and equal in dignity.
- All members of the school community have the right to have their differences and diversity valued and the responsibility to value the differences and diversity of others.

### **TMPS takes seriously the legal responsibilities under relevant legislation:**

- Equal Opportunity Act 1995
- Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006
- Disability and Discrimination Act 1992
- Disability Discrimination Act 1992
- Education and Training Reform Act 2006

### **The following Policies outline in further detail the school's goals and implementation strategies:**

Anti Bullying	Community Grievance	Staff Dress Code
Internet Usage	Asthma	Attendance
Homework	Medication	Uniform
Anti Harassment	Complaints Resolution	Occupational Health and Safety
Sexual Harassment	Sunsmart	Prevention of Workplace Bullying
First Aid	Mobile Phone Use	Team Approach
Assessment and Reporting	Equal Opportunity	Privacy
Drug Education	Anaphylaxis	
Head Lice	Cyber Bullying	

### **Child Safe Policies**

Child Safe Student Code of Conduct  
Child Safe Code of Conduct – staff  
Child Safe Policy  
Mandatory Reporting Policy

## Appendix D

### Shared Expectations

At TMPS there are shared and high expectations for all sections of the community

### Shared Expectations of Principal, teachers and staff

- The school values of respect, cooperation, resilience, confidence and honesty as set out in the Strategic Plan will underpin all actions by staff
- Teaching practices will be inclusive of all students and families in the community
- Staff will ensure that educational provision is accessible for all students
- Staff will develop positive relationships with parents and guardians through regular parent teacher interviews, Three Way Student Led Conferences, SSG meetings, newsletter articles, Compass, family events and special occasions, information nights, opportunities for volunteers, Parents Association, School Council
- Community partnerships will be developed (Transition Programs, Work of Welfare Officer, Shire of Whittlesea programs)
- Appropriate student services will be provided as needed (referrals to psychologist, speech pathologist, Austin CAMHS, DHHS, Child First referrals, Child Protection Society, Foundation House)
- Teachers will develop appropriate, rigorous and challenging curriculum that gives students opportunities to experience success in their learning
- Principals and teachers will at all times act in accordance with the Victorian Teaching Profession Code of Conduct and the Victorian Teaching Profession Code of Ethics (<http://www.vit.vic.edu.au>)
- The Principal and teachers will promote and plan for the celebration of diversity within the school community (multi cultural food days, Harmony Week activities, Junior School Council, )

### Shared Expectations of Students

- Students will attend school regularly
- Students will participate fully in the school's educational program
- Students will be expected to display appropriate behaviours that demonstrate respect for themselves, their peers, their teachers and all other members of the school community
- Students will display the school values of respect, resilience, cooperation, confidence and honesty in their interactions with other school community members
- Students will be expected over time to take greater responsibility for their own learning and participation as members of the whole school community
- Students will respect the rights of others to learn

### Expectations of Parents/carers

- Parents/carers will promote positive outcomes for their children by taking an active interest in their educational progress
- Parents/carers will have regular and constructive communication with school staff regarding their child's learning and wellbeing
- Parents/carers will support the school in maintaining a safe and respectful learning environment for all students
- Parents/carers will model appropriate positive behaviours based on the school values of respect, resilience, cooperation, confidence and honesty in their interactions with other school community members
- Parents/carers will ensure that their children attend school regularly and punctually and will inform the school as soon as possible regarding any absences

TMPS is committed to promoting and protecting the interests and safety of children by providing an environment where children are safe, feel safe and their voices are heard.

- Parents/carers will expect and encourage their children to display appropriate behaviours at school that demonstrate respect for themselves, their peers, their teachers and all other members of the school community
- Parents/carers will assist the school in whatever capacity they are able and when possible

## **Appendix E**

### **School Actions and Consequences**

The guiding principal in developing actions and consequences is that the student's connection to school is maintained.

All school actions and consequences will:

- include an incremental or a staged response
- be fairly and consistently applied
- emphasise the positive as much as the negative
- have an educational role
- aim to foster positive relationships
- retain the dignity of the student
- avoid isolating a student from learning where possible

Student engagement, regular attendance and positive behaviours are supported through relationship-based whole-school and classroom practices which include:

- establishing fair and democratic classrooms and school environments
- ensuring student participation in the development of classroom and whole-school expectations
- providing personalised learning programs
- consistently acknowledging all students
- empowering students by creating multiple opportunities for them to take responsibility and be involved in decision making
- providing physical environments conducive to positive behaviours and effective engagement in learning
- implementing school-wide positive and educational behaviour support strategies.

#### **ATTENDANCE**

See Attendance Policy for school actions and consequences

#### **COMPLETION OF WORK**

Teachers may require a student to finish work which has not been completed in the regular classroom or at home. No more than half the time allocated for any recess may be used for this work.

#### **BEHAVIOURAL**

Each classroom will develop its own classroom Rights and Responsibilities and consequences in accordance with the school core values. These will be developed during the Start Up Program at the beginning of the school year. There will be an emphasis on the communal aspect of the rights and responsibilities and the Respectful Relationships program.

Individual Behaviour Management plans for students with extreme challenging and/or aggressive behaviours that pose a danger to own or other's health and wellbeing will be written in consultation with the classroom teacher, Principal and/or Assistant Principal, Primary Welfare Officer and parent.

In the school yard Level 1 misbehaviours will be managed immediately by the teacher on yard duty by discussion, explanation and /or counselling, walking with the teacher and apologising to others.

Level 1 Misbehaviours include: refusing to play/abide by the rules, arguing, blaming others/not accepting responsibility, deliberately spoiling the game of others, excluding others, over reacting or giving up when things go wrong, not resolving own problems, bad language (non personal), spitting on ground.

In the school yard Level 2 Misbehaviours will be managed immediately by the teacher on yard duty by explanation/counselling, student walking with the teacher and students apologizing to others. The teacher will refer to the school values and use rights and responsibilities approach with the students. The yard duty teacher will follow up with the classroom teacher. The follow up may include the use of restorative practices, an appropriate problem solver, counselling, mediation and reflection. The classroom teacher will notify the Leadership Team if there are regular occurrences eg: every week.

Level 2 Misbehaviour includes: recurrence of level 1 behaviour, emotional abuse such as spreading rumours, verbal abuse such as teasing or swearing at others and graffiti of school property.

In the school yard Level 3 misbehaviour will first be investigated by the yard duty teacher. The yard duty teacher then completes a Time Away Card and sends the student/s to the Time Away Room (Library). In Time Away the student completes a Problem Solver. The teacher allocated to Time Away Duty will then discuss the issue using the school Values and a Restorative Practice approach. The date of the incident is recorded next to the students' name and the relevant documentation is filed.

In the school yard Level 3 Misbehaviours include: bullying or threatening behaviour, vandalism such as deliberately damaging property, physical abuse with intent to harm or hurt others (hitting, kicking, scratching and fighting), deliberately spitting at someone and rock throwing.

Parents will be informed of Level 3 misbehaviours and that their child has had Time Away. They will be given the opportunity to discuss the issues with the yard duty teacher.

In the case of extreme challenging and/or aggressive behaviour teachers may control the situation by:

- Verbal intervention –“Stop Immediately!”
- Sending another child with red card to the staffroom for assistance.
- Physical intervention only if risk of significant injury to student or others.

## **SUSPENSION**

The Principal is responsible for student suspensions. Suspension will only be used when other measures have not produced a satisfactory result. The Principal will ensure that a range of measures consistent with a staged response have been considered.

A Student Support Group will be formed to inform the student and parents/carers, to identify the issues of concern and to develop a range of strategies to provide support.

Immediate suspension will only occur if the student's behaviour is such that they are putting the health, safety and wellbeing of themselves, staff or other students at significant risk.

The procedures for suspension as outlined in the DET Policy and Advisory Guidelines will be abided by.