Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy

Help for non-English speakers.

If you need help to understand the information in this policy, please contact Thomastown Meadows Primary School on (03) 9466 1810.

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.

Thomastown Meadows 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.

CONTENTS

1. School profile
2. School values, philosophy, and vision
3. Wellbeing and engagement strategies
4. Identifying students in need of support
5. Student rights and responsibilities
6. Student behavioural expectations and management
7. Engaging with families
8. Evaluation

POLICY

1. School profile

E: thomastown.meadows.ps@education.vic.gov.au | P: (03) 9466 1810 | 13 – 21 Diplomat Drive, Thomastown, VIC 3074

www.thomastownmeadows.vic.edu.au

Thomastown Meadows Primary School (TMPS) was established in 1980 and located in a residential populated area in the suburb of Thomastown, approximately 30 kilometres north of Melbourne. We have 281 students enrolled from Foundation to year 6 and 31 school staff members including Education Support Staff, a Disability Inclusion Coordinator, and a Mental Health and Wellbeing Leader.

Our school grounds are located on the land of the Aboriginal people of the Wurundjeri Willum clan, and we are surrounded by a supportive community. Thomastown Meadows Primary School has developed close ties to local community stakeholders and enjoys support from our local shops and community services.

Our school is culturally and linguistically diverse with 90% of families having a language background other than English (LBOTE), with the largest LBOTE groups being Arabic, Vietnamese and Macedonian. As a high proportion of our students are from diverse backgrounds where English is not the main language spoken at home, they are supported with the English as an Additional Language Curriculum. TMPS has a 2% representation from the Koorie community. We are proud of our diversity and inclusive school community.

Thomastown Meadows Primary School is a dynamic school promoting integrity, lifelong learning, and the attainment of excellence. We are committed to providing our students with the highest quality education through the recognition of individual learning styles, effective communication, teamwork, continuous improvement, and the development of a sense of belonging.

The core purpose of our school and our ongoing commitment is to ensure we provide our students with a safe and challenging environment that engages and stimulates them to become lifelong learners with the academic, social and personal skills needed to become productive members of a dynamic, global society.

The school values are Honesty, Empathy & Respect which were launched with fidelity and commitment as a whole school community in 2018. These values are at the centre of all our expectations. The values are evident in all areas of the school. We have worked hard to change the culture of the school to ensure this. We utilise a Rights and Responsibilities approach to behaviour management supported by using various resources and by implementing the School Wide Positive Behaviours Framework. The units of work delivered each term have a consistent link to social, emotional, and personal learning to ensure ongoing growth for each individual student and we encourage a growth mindset to ensure students see themselves as successful learners.

We strive to provide a nurturing and challenging environment that empowers students to reach their personal best, both academically and socially and work closely in partnership with families to ensure this happens.

2. School values, philosophy and vision

E: thomastown.meadows.ps@education.vic.gov.au | P: (03) 9466 1810 | 13 – 21 Diplomat Drive, Thomastown, VIC 3074

www.thomastownmeadows.vic.edu.au

Thomastown Meadows 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 **Honesty Empathy Respect** at every opportunity.

At Thomastown Meadows Primary School we believe:

- Children learn best in a positive, caring and stimulating environment where their efforts and achievements are acknowledged, valued, and encouraged.
- That the best way to encourage good behaviour is to model, recognize and acknowledge this behaviour.

Our school vision is to provide students with experiences, skills, and knowledge to become efficient communicators and life-long learners who will grow into emotionally resilient and responsible citizens.

Our Statement of Values is available online at:
https://www.thomastownmeadows.vic.edu.au/policies.

3. Wellbeing and engagement strategies

Thomastown Meadows Primary School has developed a range of strategies to promote engagement, an inclusive and safe environment, positive behaviour, and respectful relationships for all students in our school. We recognise the importance of student friendships and peer support in helping children and students feel safe and less isolated. 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 Strategies

- high and consistent expectations of all staff, students and parents and carers
- prioritising positive relationships between staff and students, and 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, parent survey data, student management data and school level assessment data
- teachers at Thomastown Meadows Primary School use the Workshop Model and Gradual Release of Responsibility as an instructional framework to ensure an explicit, common, and

E: thomastown.meadows.ps@education.vic.gov.au | P: (03) 9466 1810 | 13 - 21 Diplomat Drive, Thomastown, VIC 3074

www.thomastownmeadows.vic.edu.au

shared model of instruction to ensure that evidenced-based, high yield teaching practices are incorporated into all lessons

- teachers at Thomastown Meadows 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 and School Philosophy 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
- monitoring student attendance and implementing attendance improvement strategies at a whole-school, cohort, and individual level
- students can contribute to and provide feedback on decisions about school operations through the Student Representative Council and other forums including year group meetings. Students are also encouraged to speak with their teachers, Year Level Coordinator, Assistant Principal and Principal whenever they have any questions or concerns.
- creating opportunities for cross—age connections amongst students through whole school events, athletics day, diversity colour fun run, after school Learning club, Art and Music wellness programs and peer support programs
- engaging with the Mental Health and Wellbeing Leader, Disability Inclusion Coordinator, Year Group Leaders, 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 are proud to have an 'open door' policy where students and staff are partners in learning
- engaging in school wide positive behaviour support with our staff and students, which includes programs such as:
    - Respectful Relationships
    - Bully Stoppers
    - Berry Street Education Model
- programs, incursions, and excursions developed to address issue specific needs or behaviour (i.e., cyberbullying, mental health and wellbeing, respect for differences)
- opportunities for student inclusion (i.e., School Representative Council, House sports leaders, School Captains, recess and lunchtime wellbeing clubs, breakfast club, Family Learning club, Team building sport program)
- buddy programs
- measures are in place to empower our school community to identify, report and address inappropriate and harmful behaviours such as racism, homophobia and other forms of discrimination or harassment (i.e., policies, teaching and learning programs).

Targeted Strategies

E: thomastown.meadows.ps@education.vic.gov.au | P: (03) 9466 1810 | 13 - 21 Diplomat Drive, Thomastown, VIC 3074

www.thomastownmeadows.vic.edu.au

- each year group are responsible for their cohort and monitor the health and wellbeing of their students at weekly collaborative planning sessions. Vulnerable students are recorded on the Mental Health Continuum and MTSS spreadsheet. The Disability Inclusion and Mental Health and Wellbeing Leader attend these sessions to discuss strategies.
- Social and Emotional Learning programs are provided as necessary i.e., Art wellness, music wellness and CASEA sessions
- The Assistant Principal acts as a point of contact for more complex cases and students who may need additional support. The Mental Health and Wellbeing Leader and Disability Inclusion Coordinator/Learning Specialist also act as a point of contact for students who may require additional support
- Koorie students are supported to engage fully in their education, in a positive learning environment that understands and appreciates the strength of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture – refer to our Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy for further information
- our English as a second language students are supported through the mainstream classroom with a focus on the EAL Curriculum, and all cultural and linguistically diverse (CALD) students are supported to feel safe and included in our school including through Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy
- we support learning and wellbeing outcomes of students from refugee background through the Refugee Education Support Program (RESP) and partnering with Foundation House, Centre for Multicultural Youth and Whittlesea Community Connections to establish the afterschool Family Learning Club, Sports program and cooking programs for Refugee and vulnerable students of CALD background. Thomastown Meadows Primary School uses the RESP Action Plan to guide our work in this space.
- we provide a positive and respectful learning environment for our students who identify as LGBTIQ+ and follow the Department's policy on *LGBTIQ Student Support [insert any specific measures at your school to support LGBTIQ+ students]*
- 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
- Thomastown Meadows Primary School 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 undertake wellbeing and health professional learning and social skills development in response to needs identified by student wellbeing data, classroom teachers or other school staff each year e.g., Mental Health First Aid training, First Aide training, Positive Classroom Management Strategies (PCMS) and other relevant professional learning
- staff will apply trauma-informed approach to working with students who have experienced trauma i.e., Berry Street Education Model (BSEM)

E: thomastown.meadows.ps@education.vic.gov.au | P: (03) 9466 1810 | 13 – 21 Diplomat Drive, Thomastown, VIC 3074

www.thomastownmeadows.vic.edu.au

- students enrolled under the Department's international student program are supported in accordance with our legal obligations and Department policy and guidelines at: *International Student Program*

Individual Strategies

Student specific strategies that may be considered and applied on a case by case basis include:

- Student Support Groups
- Individual Education Plans
- Behaviour Support Plans
- Student Support Services

as well as to other Department programs and services such as:

- Program for Students with Disabilities
- Mental health and Wellbeing toolkit
- Headspace
- LOOKOUT
- The Smith Family
- Foundation House
- Possible referrals to The Orange Door and or DFFH

Thomastown Meadows 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 discuss how best to help the student engage with school
- developing an Individual Education Plan, Safety Plan, Behaviour Support Plan and or Absence Plan
- considering if any environmental changes need to be made, for example changing the classroom set up, provision for inclusive furniture, calm spaces, and sensory tools
- 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, Foundation House, Centre for Multicultural Youth, Whittlesea Community Connections, child and Adolescent Mental Health Services or The Orange Door

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

E: thomastown.meadows.ps@education.vic.gov.au | P: (03) 9466 1810 | 13 - 21 Diplomat Drive, Thomastown, VIC 3074

www.thomastownmeadows.vic.edu.au

- 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
- engaging with our regional Koorie Education Support Officer: Klaudia Farnham klaudia.farnham@education.vic.gov.au
- running regular Student Support Group meetings and or Care Team/Professionals 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

Thomastown Meadows 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.

Thomastown Meadows 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
- personal and health information shared with the school from outside agencies e.g., DFFH, Orange Door, Child Link and any other specialist services
- attendance records
- detention and suspension data
- academic performance
- observations by school staff such as changes in engagement, behaviour, self-care, social connectedness, and motivation
- mental, health and wellbeing continuum data and MTSS records
- 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's Statement of Values highlights the rights and responsibilities of members of our community.

E: thomastown.meadows.ps@education.vic.gov.au | P: (03) 9466 1810 | 13 - 21 Diplomat Drive, Thomastown, VIC 3074

www.thomastownmeadows.vic.edu.au

Each classroom will develop its own classroom rights and responsibilities and consequences in accordance with the school core values and School Behaviour Matrix aligned with SWPB. 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.

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.

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 and management

Behavioural expectations of students are grounded in our school's Statement of Values and Student Code of Conduct.

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

When a student acts in breach of the behaviour standards of our school community, Thomastown Meadows Primary School will institute a staged response, consistent with the Department's policies on behaviour, discipline and student wellbeing and engagement. Reference to the TMPS Behaviour Flow Chart will be made. Where appropriate, parents 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 detention, withdrawal of privileges or withdrawal from class.

E: thomastown.meadows.ps@education.vic.gov.au | P: (03) 9466 1810 | 13 – 21 Diplomat Drive, Thomastown, VIC 3074

www.thomastownmeadows.vic.edu.au

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 Year Level Coordinator
- restorative practices
- detentions
- behaviour support and intervention meetings
- 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 Thomastown Meadows 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

Thomastown Meadows 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.

E: thomastown.meadows.ps@education.vic.gov.au | P: (03) 9466 1810 | 13 - 21 Diplomat Drive, Thomastown, VIC 3074

www.thomastownmeadows.vic.edu.au

- 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
- involving families in the school's Parent Association Committee
- involving dads and father figures in the Fathering project
- coordinating resources and services from the community for families
- including families in Student Support Groups and developing individual education plans for students.

8. Evaluation

Thomastown Meadows 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
- mental health and wellbeing continuum/MTSS data
- school reports
- parent survey
- case management
- CASES21, including attendance and absence data
- SOCS

Thomastown Meadows Primary School will also regularly monitor available data dashboards e.g., chronicles, 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 ways:

- Available publicly on our school's website https://www.thomastownmeadows.vic.edu.au/policies
- Included in staff induction processes
- Discussed at staff briefings or meetings as required
- Discussed at student forums i.e., SRC
- 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:

E: thomastown.meadows.ps@education.vic.gov.au | P: (03) 9466 1810 | 13 – 21 Diplomat Drive, Thomastown, VIC 3074

www.thomastownmeadows.vic.edu.au

- 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 Policy
- Bullying Prevention Policy
- Inclusion and Diversity Policy
- Statement of Values and School Philosophy

POLICY REVIEW AND APPROVAL

Created date	October 2024
Consultation	Sought feedback from School Council (20-11-2024) School community via newsletter and website (21-11-2024)
Approved by	Principal (20-11-2024)
Next review date	October 2026
Responsibility	Assistant Principal

E: thomastown.meadows.ps@education.vic.gov.au | P: (03) 9466 1810 | 13 - 21 Diplomat Drive, Thomastown, VIC 3074

www.thomastownmeadows.vic.edu.au