Student Wellbeing and Engagement

POLICY

Help for non-English speakers
If you need help to understand the information in this policy please contact Karoo Primary School office on (03) 9759 222.

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.

Karoo 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
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For the purpose of this policy, “digital technologies” are defined as digital devices, tools, applications and systems that students and teachers use for learning and teaching; this includes Department-provided software and locally sourced devices, tools and systems.

Policy

1. School Profile

Karoo Primary School has developed a positive culture of making a difference in students’ education and assisting them to achieve their potential. Together with our community we aim to educate the whole child and provide them with lifelong learning skills. The school encourages a close relationship between home and school with the emphasis that education is a partnership between parents, students and teachers.

Karoo PS has modern high calibre classrooms with extensive equipment that facilitates student learning. We are very proud of our grounds that combine extensive artificial turf areas, hardcourt areas, 3 playgrounds and beautiful landscaping that promotes positive physical and passive play.

Karoo Primary School enjoys a unique parkland environment with beautiful, quiet and safe indoor and outdoor learning spaces. The school atmosphere is supportive and friendly where every child’s education is of the highest priority. The school prides itself on providing a personal approach to student learning, through highly engaging programs that supports every student to achieve their full potential physically, emotionally and academically. The school’s high emphasis on nurturing and wellbeing gives students the opportunity to learn the skills and resilience to be successful in life. The school shares a unique relationship with the wider community. This is exemplified by the positive relationship between the staff and parents both during and outside of school hours.

The school supports all students through a strategic preventative and intervention approach led by the Student Wellbeing Leader. Teachers deliver social skills and wellbeing programs at each level of the school embeding ‘Respectful Relationships’ which is supported by the Student Wellbeing Team, Wellbeing Liasion and outside specialists. Student leaders have an active role in supporting students across the school through Student Representative Council, Year 5 PLAY LEADERS and Year 5 buddy monitors as well as through the buddy program which is a 2 year program supporting relationships between Foundation and Year 5 students and Year 1 and Year 6 students. Restorative Practices are embedded throughout the school to build relationships between students and staff. Karoo PS participates is the School Wide Positive Behaviour Support (SWBPS) Framework, which supports schools to improve behavioural, emotional and academic outcomes for students. SWBPS focuses on building positive, safe and supportive learning cultures that maximise success and engagement for all students.

The values of Kindness, Tenacity and Personal Excellence underpin the school’s operation. For our School Community this means that everyone will be treated with respect and every student will be supported and encouraged to reach their full potential through a stimulating, challenging curriculum. We will equip our students to embrace their future with curiosity and creativity, optimism and confidence with an ability to communicate, share and make informed choices. We care about students and understand the importance of student wellbeing. We are committed to the development of social competencies and life skills such as persistence, independence, problem solving and resilience in our students and believe that they are fundamental to success and happiness.

Karoo PS has a strong tradition of excellent educational provision. We provide a rich and stimulating education program incorporating discipline based, inter-disciplinary and physical, personal and social learning with a focus on the development of sound literacy and numeracy skills. The school has an excellent reputation for delivering high quality programs. Specialist (non-grade committed) teaching is provided in Performing Arts, Visual Arts, Physical Education, Science and Language (Mandarin). Students benefit from participation in instrumental music lessons and an extensive student leadership program is provided to promote nurturing and development of organisation, initiative, confidence and responsibility in our students.

The Karoo Primary School Council meets regularly to discuss issues relating to the governance of the school. Joining the school council provides parents and school community members the opportunity to voice their opinions on the direction that the school is taking.

Parents are also involved in a wide range of classroom and whole school activities including; supporting literacy and numeracy programs, reading helpers, attending student support group meetings, attending school camps and excursions, assisting in sporting events, whole school celebrations and events. Parents and staff work together to create opportunities for our students to engage and achieve in all that they do.

Our school has developed positive relationships with our local kindergartens/Child Care Centres, secondary schools and retirement villages to provide a range of engagement opportunities for our students. This relationship looks like committed transition programs, kindergarten reading programs and intergenerational programs, which our students benefit significantly from.

2. School values, philosophy and vision

Karoo Primary School's Statement of Values 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 Kindness, Tenacity and Personal Excellence at every opportunity.

Our school's vision is to empower students to reach their personal best, and fully equip them to contribute positively to society as happy, healthy young adults. Our Statement of Values is available on our school website.

3. Wellbeing and engagement strategies

Karoo 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:

<u>Universal</u>

- 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, parent survey data, student management data and school level assessment data
- teachers at Karoo Primary School use an instructional framework to ensure an explicit, common and shared model of instruction to ensure that evidenced-based, high yield teaching practices are incorporated into all lessons
- teachers at Karoo 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
- 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. Students are also encouraged to speak with their teachers, Year Level Leader, Sub School Leader, Wellbeing Leader, Assistant Principal and 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 Student Wellbeing Leader, Wellbeing Liaison, Year Group Leaders, Sub School 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
- we engage in school wide positive behaviour support with our staff and students, which includes programs such as:
    - Respectful Relationships (RR)
    - Resilience, Rights and Respectful Relationships (RRRR)
    - Safe Schools
    - School Wide Positive Behaviour Support (SWPBS)
- programs, incursions and excursions developed to address issue specific needs or behaviour (i.e. anger management programs)
- opportunities for student inclusion (i.e. sports teams, clubs, recess and lunchtime activities)
- buddy programs, peers support programs, Play Leaders, Intergenerational 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.

<u>Targeted</u>

- Each year group has a Year Group Leader, a senior 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

- 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
- our English as a second language students are supported through our EAL program, and all cultural and linguistically diverse students are supported to feel safe and included in our school
- we support learning and wellbeing outcomes of students from refugee background
- 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
- 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 (IEP) 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
- 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

Karoo 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
- establishing a student support group, who meets regularly to discuss student need and identified student support plans
- developing an Individual Education Plan and/or a Behaviour Support Plan
- considering if any environmental changes need to be made, such as for making reasonable adjustments to the classroom learning environment to support inclusion and access to learning
- referring the student to:
    - school-based wellbeing supports, such as Wellbeing Groups
    - 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 Orange Door
    - 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
- engaging with our regional Koorie Education Support Officers
- 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

Karoo 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 help identify students in need of support and enhance student wellbeing. Karoo 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'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, 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/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. 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, Karoo Primary School will institute a staged response, consistent with the Department's policies on behaviour, discipline and student wellbeing and engagement. 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 implement positive and non-punitive interventions to support student behaviour before considering disciplinary measures such as withdrawal of privileges or withdrawal from class.

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 Leader/Sub School Leader
- restorative practices
- 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 Karoo 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

Karoo 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

Karoo 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
- CASES21, including attendance and absence data
- SOCS

Karoo 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 ways

- Available publicly on our school's website
- Included in staff induction processes
- Included as annual reference in school newsletter
- 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

Approval

Policy last reviewed	August 2024
Consultation	With school community via newsletter and compass Sept 2024 School Council Sept 2024
Approved by	Principal
Next scheduled review date	August 2026