

Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy



HELP FOR NON-ENGLISH SPEAKERS

If you need help to understand the information in this policy, please contact Baxter Primary School on 03 5971 1391 or baxter.ps@education.vic.gov.au.

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.

Baxter 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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POLICY

1. School profile

Baxter Primary School is a dynamic, community-minded school with a rich history dating back to its establishment in 1890, located just 3km from the Baxter township. Our school currently hosts 10 classes, accommodating a total of 198 students. We take great pride in our long-standing tradition of serving the community.

Our school is set amidst beautiful surroundings with expansive outdoor areas, including two grassed sports fields, separate senior and junior playgrounds, a basketball court, a sensory garden and a versatile outdoor space. These facilities foster learning through play and encourage active, healthy lifestyles that benefit both physical and mental well-being. In 2020, we also completed a \$2.5 million redevelopment of our Junior School.

Baxter Primary School is a nurturing community where students are inspired to reach their full potential and grow into successful citizens. We actively encourage parents to engage in their children's education alongside our dedicated, caring and supportive staff.

Together, we strive to cultivate a community of responsible and resilient learners who excel academically, creatively and socially. We emphasise values such as kindness, respect, inclusivity and encouragement.

At Baxter Primary, we are passionately committed to teaching and learning. Our structured Literacy program is designed to develop skills in reading, viewing, writing, speaking and listening within a supportive and stimulating environment. Our planning aligns with the Victorian Curriculum and is grounded in best practices and evidence-based research. We employ explicit teaching across all year levels, following the Gradual Release of Responsibility model (I Do, We Do, You Do). Our two-hour daily literacy blocks, from Foundation to Year 6, are dedicated, uninterrupted learning time. Our staff continuously expand their professional knowledge, guided by the Science of Learning, which shapes the teaching strategies in our classrooms.

We maintain an open-door policy at Baxter Primary, fostering respectful relationships among parents, students, and staff. Our comprehensive curriculum spans Foundation to Year 6, covering Literacy, Numeracy, Technology, Science, Humanities, The Arts, Health and Physical Education.

Our teachers collaborate in teams to ensure a consistent and guaranteed curriculum for all students. We utilise student data to tailor learning experiences, constantly striving to enhance student outcomes. As a Professional Learning Community (PLC), we are committed to continuous improvement.

Our school also benefits from the support of a part-time Chaplain, who provides assistance to our students and their families. Programs such as Respectful Relationships and our Buddy Program further enhance our students' sense of wellbeing and belonging.

In addition to academic programs, we offer a variety of enrichment and extracurricular activities, including instrumental music, environmental initiatives, lunchtime clubs and an extensive range of sporting activities. We also run a weekly Breakfast Club for our students.

Our Before and After School Care facility operates Monday through to Friday and includes a school holiday program.

2. School values, philosophy and vision

Baxter 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 ASPIRE values at every opportunity.

The ASPIRE values are at the heart of our school community, guiding how we learn, interact, and grow together. They shape the way we approach challenges, celebrate achievements, and support one another.

In the classroom, the ASPIRE values encourage perseverance, curiosity, and a commitment to doing our best. They help create an environment where students feel empowered to take risks and learn from their experiences.

On the playground, these values promote inclusion, fairness, and kindness, ensuring that everyone feels welcome and respected. By living out the ASPIRE values, students contribute to a safe and positive school environment.

The ASPIRE values were shaped through collaboration with students, teachers, and families, reflecting our collective identity. The ASPIRE logos displayed around the school are reminders of the values we strive to live each day.

By embracing these values, we build a school culture where everyone is included, respected, and excited to learn and grow.

Our school's vision is to create a positive, inclusive and happy learning environment, in which children can achieve their potential.

Our Statement of Values is available online at: <https://baxterps.vic.edu.au/>

3. Wellbeing and engagement strategies

Baxter 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:

School Culture and Values:

- Baxter Primary School fosters a positive, safe, and supportive school culture.
- All members of the school community are valued, and students have meaningful opportunities to contribute.
- Students are encouraged to meet their personal and educational potential.
- School values form the framework for teaching positive behaviours, with resilience, rights, and respectful relationships guiding teaching practices.

1:1 Device Program:

- The 1:1 device program promotes engagement using 21st-century learning tools like Google Suite, Seesaw, Mathletics, and Literacy Pro.
- These programs and multi-function devices prepare students for an increasingly digital world.

Student Leadership and Voice:

- Students are encouraged to strive for leadership roles.
- Student voice is valued through participation in the Baxter Focus Group, class agreements, leadership roles in Years 5 and 6, and extra-curricular enrichment clubs

Student Art and Ownership:

- Student-created art is permanently displayed in the school.
- Students are given opportunities to contribute to their educational experience, including the physical learning environment, fostering a sense of ownership and pride

Communication:

- High levels of communication are maintained for smooth school operation.
- Parents receive ongoing updates about learning focuses, welfare programs, and community opportunities.
- Communication also occurs through parent-teacher conferences, curriculum information evenings, and school council updates

Attendance and Engagement:

- Baxter Primary encourages regular attendance to maximize learning and foster school connectedness
- Student absenteeism is monitored, and families are informed of their responsibility to support attendance.
- Students with absenteeism patterns are offered support to meet attendance goals.
- Weekly breakfast club and events like the Easter raffle and whole-school reading log promote community and inclusivity.

Student Achievements:

- Achievements in academics, performing arts, physical education, and citizenship are recognized in termly assemblies, newsletters, and classroom programs.
- The Principal's Award recognizes students with an outstanding approach to learning and who set a positive example.
- The ASPIRE award is a fortnightly recognition of behaviours which represent the schools values.

Enrichment Programs:

- A variety of student-led and staff-led enrichment programs are offered, including sports, arts and crafts, chess club, choir, and instrumental programs.
- Students can participate in the Premier's Reading Challenge and the Lions Club Quiz.

Targeted

- 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 – through the use of KESO's and KELP plans
- 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 including through the use of external programs and services.
- We support learning and wellbeing outcomes of students from refugee background through [insert any specific strategies or measures you have in place to support 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 Learning Plan 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
- Implement **calm-down strategies** in classrooms with sensory tools for students to use when feeling overwhelmed.
- Establish **regular check-ins** with parents to discuss progress and address any early concerns related to social or emotional development.
- Offer dedicated **social-emotional learning (SEL) opportunities** that focus on building self-awareness, managing emotions, and fostering positive relationships.
- Provide **differentiated learning opportunities** tailored to the individual needs of students who are excelling or need extra support.

Individual

Baxter 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
- Facilitating care team meetings
- Developing an Individual Learning Plan and/or a Behaviour Support Plan
- Considering if any environmental changes need to be made, for example changing the classroom set-up
- Referring the student to:
 - School-based wellbeing supports

- 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 Plans 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:
 - 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

Baxter 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. Baxter Primary School will utilise the following information and tools to identify students in need of extra emotional, social or educational support:

- the use of "Students on the Radar" process
- personal, health and learning information gathered upon enrolment and while the student is enrolled
- attendance records and data
- academic performance
- observations by school staff such as changes in engagement, behaviour, self-care, social connectedness and motivation
- 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:

- Work in a secure environment where, without intimidation, bullying (including cyber-bullying) or harassment, they are able to fully develop their talents, interests and ambition.
- Participate fully in the school's educational program.
- Be treated with respect and fairness.
- Express ourselves and be listened to.
- Learn and play in an inviting, sociable and positive environment

Students have the responsibility to:

- Demonstrate respect for the rights of others, including the right to learn, and contribute to an engaging educational experience for themselves and other students.
- Take greater responsibility with encouragement and support for their own learning and participate as members of the whole school community. This involves developing as individual learners who increasingly manage their own learning and growth by setting goals and managing resources to achieve these goals.

- Participate fully in the school's educational program. Students should also display positive behaviours that demonstrate respect for themselves, their peers, their teachers and all other members of the school community.
- Respect themselves, other members of the community and the school environment.

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 the Baxter Primary School Bullying Policy. Bullying will be managed in accordance with our Bullying Prevention Policy.

Classroom Expectations of Students include:

- Positive participation in all school activities.
- Following instructions from teachers at all times.
- Regularly attend from 9-3.15pm (Absences must have a written note/communication with the office or classroom teacher or registered via compass. Students may not leave the school without a responsible adult accompanying).
- Treating others with respect and dignity in line with our school values
- Always using respectful and appropriate language. (no "put downs", teasing)
- Being proactive in asking for help/seeking clarification.
- Taking off our hats when we come inside.
- Walking inside and around the buildings.
- Wearing our full school uniform with covered toe shoes.
- No chewing gum or bubble gum at school.
- Mobile phones are not permitted to be used at school during school hours. They must be handed to the school office before 9:00am and locked in a secure cabinet until 3:15pm.
- Dangerous objects that could frighten or injure are not to come to school. Expensive toys, games should not come to school.
- Valuing school resources.
- Supporting classmates/teachers contributions and efforts in all activities.
- Using ICT appropriately and for the purpose intended.
- When on excursions, normal school rules apply and road safety rules must be adhered to at all times.
- Respecting and maintaining theirs and others' working areas.

Playground Expectations of Students include:

- Remaining within the school grounds unless under the supervision of a teacher or parent.
- Playing safely in the school grounds:
- Tackling and rough behaviour is not permitted.
- Ball games are to be played away from buildings-cricket- use tennis ball only.
- Wearing a hat when outside according to the SunSmart Policy.
- Remaining on asphalt areas when eating
- Not being inside buildings during playtimes without permission or supervision
- Not playing ball games near calm spaces or running games along the junior building deck.

When a student acts in breach of the behaviour standards of our school community, Baxter 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 detention, 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:

Stage 1: Prevention and Early Intervention- Creating a positive school culture

- Define and teach school wide expectations for all.
- Establish relevant school wide prevention programs.
- Establish consistent school wide processes to identify students at risk of disengagement from learning.
- Establish consistent school wide processes and programs for early intervention.
- Establish data collection strategies.

Stage 2: Intervention: A targeted response for Individual Students

- Establish an understanding of circumstances impacting on the student.
- Develop a plan for improvement based on data and review regularly.
- Explicitly teach and /or build replacement behaviours.
- Establish inclusive and consistent classroom strategies.
- Establish out-of-class support strategies.
- Establish a student support group.

Stage 3: Discipline Procedures:

Withdrawal & Detention

When considering suspension or expulsion, schools are required to follow the procedures listed in section 4.3 of the DEECD guidelines published in Effective Schools are Engaging Schools Student Engagement Policy Guidelines

A student may be excluded from school situations where all other measures have been implemented without success or where a severe consequence is the only appropriate course of action in response to a student's behaviour

- Withdrawal of privileges including use of technology
- Withdrawal from class if a student's behaviour significantly interferes with the rights of other students to learn or the capacity of a teacher to teach in class.
- Recess or lunchtime detention.
- Support group convened (if deemed appropriate).

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.

The Principal of Baxter 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

Baxter 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.

Expectations of Parents / Carers include:

- Supporting their children's education.
- Cooperating with school requests.
- Ensuring their children attend school regularly.
- Communicating clearly and respectfully with the school regarding their children's needs.
- Listening to teachers' insights into their children's learning.
- Reading and responding appropriately to school communications.

8. Evaluation

Baxter 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
- COMPASS, including attendance and absence data
- SOCS

Baxter 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 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

POLICY REVIEW AND APPROVAL

Policy last reviewed	26-11-2024
Consultation	School Council presentation 26-11-2024
Approved by	Principal
Next scheduled review date	Before November 2026