

Student Engagement Policy



Preston North East
Primary School

*This policy should be read with reference to: **The Department of Education and Early Childhood (DDECD) guidelines**, in particular the **Student Engagement Policy guidelines**, the **Victorian Teaching Profession Code of Conduct**, the **Equal Opportunity Act 2010 (Vic)**, the **Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 (Vic)**, and the **Disability Discrimination Act 2006 (Vic)***

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School Profile Statement:

Preston North East Primary School is growing in numbers and currently has 440 students. It was established in 1957 and is close to Northland Shopping Complex and the Darebin Creek Parklands.

The school has 33.5 staff which includes a Principal, Assistant Principal, 29 teaching staff and 2.5 Administration staff. We also have 7 Education Support Officers who assist students with disabilities or multicultural needs and one welfare officer. It is pleasing to report that all students in our Program for Students with a Disability showed progress satisfactory in achieving their individual goals. The school has enthusiastic and dedicated staff providing a safe and caring environment where the goal is to optimize learning outcomes and personal growth for students. Our motto of "Learning and Growing Together" is imbedded in the school's purpose statement of providing a caring and challenging learning environment that equips children with the necessary skills to become valued members of the community. Values of individual excellence, confidence and persistence, respect for others and resilience are reinforced through all aspects of school life.

PNE is committed to improving the achievement of all students and prides itself on continuous development. We continue to build a vibrant learning community that improves connections to the world and maximizes opportunities for all students. Everyone connected to the school is challenged by a responsibility and accountability to make the school the best it can possibly be.

This school has an average of 23 students per class for grades F-6, and specialist Literacy and Numeracy support. Specialist teachers provide programs in Art, Music, PE and Italian. The school has first class facilities and grounds with Interactive White Boards and iPads used in all classrooms.

Whole School Prevention Statement:

Preston North East Primary School aims to support and extend all individual students achievement in a caring and challenging learning environment that equips our students to become valued members of the community.

The school's purpose is based on the vision of providing a stimulating environment that allows students to achieve their full potential by promoting an education of real value that produces proud, engaged students who are skilled, flexible, responsible, resilient and creative. The following values underpin the life of our school and how ALL members of the school community should conduct themselves:

- To aim for individual excellence
- To be confident and persistent
- To respect and value others
- To be resilient

Wellbeing:

The school's code of behaviour and whole-school behaviour management strategy retains the focus on respect for people, for property and for learning in our classrooms. Each student is aware that bullying and intolerance are not accepted at this school and that good manners and hard work are encouraged.

Our whole school student wellbeing program is based on the *You Can Do It*, Program. It incorporates a suite of additional programs based on our values, a philosophy of prevention and early intervention, thinking skills (Habits of Mind) and social emotional learning (Emotional Intelligence and Social Competencies development). A feature of this is the fortnightly recognition and presentation of *You Can Do It* certificates at assembly that acknowledge success in all areas of achievement.

Our two week Start-up program, implemented across the school at the start of Term 1 each year, is a vital part of setting up a classroom culture of respect, co-operation and positive relationships. This articulates and supports our whole school Behaviours and Expectations which provides a clear, consistent approach. Each student engages with the Student Code of Conduct in a child-centred, developmentally appropriate, learning environment that recognises, fosters and promotes the intellectual, social, emotional and physical development of each child. We understand that many children have unique wellbeing and learning needs and we are committed to addressing these needs.

We have a clear Anti-Bullying Policy and support the DEECD strategy 'Safe Schools are Effective Schools'. This highlights that every student has the right to feel safe from bullying at school. All forms of bullying, whether physical, verbal or cyber are not tolerated at any level at Preston North East Primary School. Students will be provided with the understanding and strategies that will assist them to deal and cope with bullying and cyber bullying scenarios. They will learn to understand the seriousness of anti-social 'bullying' behaviour.

Attendance:

Our attendance rate in 2013 showed that students attended 92% of tuition days available. Students and parents understand the value of high attendance in relation to student performance and many students attended with less than 2 days absence for the year. To further improve student attendance rates we continue to provide parents with information in the weekly newsletter, actively celebrate our monthly attendance successes at school assembly, advocate the reduction of extended holidays during school time and reward individuals and grades for improved attendance rates.

The Attitudes to Schools survey is completed by our Year 5 and 6 students annually. Our results in 2013 place our students well above the state median. Our students' data shows a strong sense of connectedness to the school, their peers and their teachers. To maintain these strong results we will continue to provide a rich curriculum and promote opportunities for student leadership and decision making. Students at PNE love their school and it shows in attitudes towards each other.

Engagement Strategies

At Preston North East Primary School a range of programs specifically teach and foster:

- Positive Habits of the Mind (Self Talk)
- Shared Community Values
- Student Leadership and development of the Student Voice
- Social Competencies and
- Cooperative Learning Strategies

We strive to provide effective supports for students in need. Currently we implement a range of programs, strategies and supports for students at our school directly linked to providing effective student engagement. These include:

- Information Communication Technologies (ICT) are embedded within learning to maximize the engagement of all students.
- Program Achieve: You Can Do It is a values Education program that identifies the four key foundations and the eleven Habits of the Mind that underpin success;
- Ramon Lewis Restorative practice approaches including classroom circle time linked to relationship building;
- Utilisation of 'expert' support through educational psychologists, school nurse, speech pathologists, visiting teachers and external agencies; disability support programs; intervention programs for Literacy and Numeracy; teacher aides;
- Individual Learning Plans; individual behaviour plans; KELPS
- parent information forums;
- Before and After School Care;
- playground and lunchtime programs.

Early Intervention

We believe that a successful behaviour management approach is far more than a single program or product. It is an ongoing process involving every member of the school community, differentiated according to individual need.

A restorative approach is used whereby relationships are restored and damage is repaired. Our focus is on expectations rather than rules, consequences rather than punishments and problem solving rather than conflict. Our dialogue with children is characterised by expressions such as getting along, cooperation and respect.

At the beginning of the year, as part of our focus on "Start Up Program", each class establishes their class values and expectations of each other within the context of the Student Code of Conduct and our Expectations and Behaviours. There is a focus on identifying and acknowledging appropriate behaviour, rewarding it in a variety of ways including stickers, tickets, reward points and whole class rewards such as a special activity at the end of the term. The foundation of identifying and acknowledging appropriate behaviour is verbal praise and recognition. In addition to on-going praise and acknowledgement at an individual level, within the classroom and playground, each week teachers select students to receive 'Student of the Week' awards. These awards are presented at our school assembly and are a source of great pride and celebration.

While our focus is on promoting appropriate behaviour, consequences may be provided when children choose to behave in inappropriate ways. In most circumstances, this will usually involve the inappropriate behaviour being identified and the child given an opportunity to modify their behaviour. If a child chooses not to respond to this learning opportunity, further consequences will be imposed such as withdrawal to a quiet area within the classroom or into another nearby classroom.

In more serious circumstances the student would be referred through the Student Management process. Parents are contacted where there are any concerns and are advised if their child is referred to the School Management team. Information related to suspension and expulsion procedures are located in the last section of this policy.

Playground programs

Our approach to student management in the playground is similar to that in the classroom, with the same expectations and values being promoted. Teachers supervising in the playground acknowledge appropriate behaviour verbally. A similar process to the classroom will be followed if a child chooses to behave inappropriately in the playground. The inappropriate behaviour will be identified and the child given the opportunity to modify the behaviour. If the child chooses not to respond to this warning, the child may be required to walk with the supervising teacher for a period of time. In more serious circumstances an Incident Report is completed, the parent is contacted and an appropriate intervention program is designed to support the student(s).

Community Partnerships

Student Management is most effective when parents, children and teachers work together to establish the values and expectations of the school community and appropriate behaviour in the classroom and the playground. In some circumstances, parents will be invited to join with their child's teacher to develop an Individual Learning Plan (ILP) to assist their child develop appropriate behaviour patterns in the classroom or the playground. An Individual Learning Plan will identify the skills to be developed and will outline strategies to be used at school and, if appropriate, at home. We place great importance on this partnership and value the support of parents and children.

At Preston North East we have an active commitment to promoting children's personal well-being and feeling of safety and security as vital precursors to successful learning.

Attendance

The school promotes the philosophy of: 'It's Not Okay To Be Away' and we believe that attending school every day is important for a student's education. The importance of regular attendance at school is promoted in the school newsletter.

During the school assembly each month whole school attendance results are shared and the classes with the best results receive awards. Teachers encourage students to attend through individual and area awards as well.

Management monitors student's absences. If a student missing three days consecutively or month and one day a week over a month the child's family will be notified by the class teacher. If a sufficient explanation is not given, the management will either arrange a meeting with the parents or conduct a home visit. If the child's attendance does not improve then a report will be made to the Department's student truancy officer.

Rights and Responsibilities

Every member of the school community has a right to fully participate in an educational environment that is safe, supportive and inclusive. Everyone deserves to be treated with respect and dignity.

Our values for students, their parents/carers and our staff encompass the Values for Australian Schooling and the National Goals for Schooling in Australia in the Twenty First Century

- **To aim for individual excellence** – Be the best you can be!
- **To be confident and persistent** – Believe in yourself and work hard to achieve your goals.
- **To respect and value others** - Treating others with consideration and regard
- **To be resilient** – Always strive to rebound from disappointments in order to achieve your best.

Understandings of these shared values were considered when formulating the following statement of 'Expectations and Behaviours' for our Student Code of Conduct:

- Have a friendly and positive attitude
- Speak politely to everyone
- Always do your best
- Help others
- Welcome and accept everyone
- Show understanding

Be safe

- Sensible behaviours inside and outside
- Walk in corridors and breezeways
- Line up in an orderly way
- Sticks and stones stay on the ground
- Wear hats in Term 1 and Term 4

Be co-operative

- Sharing and taking turns
- Playing fairly
- Include others
- Work quietly so as not to disturb others

Respect each other

- Look at people when they are speaking
- Be fair and honest
- Show patience when waiting for your turn
- Value different opinions

Respect property

- Respect the property of others
- Look after your own belongings
- Clean up after yourself
- Keep our playground and buildings clean and tidy

A student in our school is

- Able to make connections
- Prepared to take risks
- Seeking deeper meaning
- Curious
- A team player
- Creative
- Positive
- Able to give feedback
- Able to accept feedback
- Responsible for their learning
- Open-minded
- Able to use time well
- Motivated
- Enthusiastic
- Organised
- Engaged

Shared Expectations

Effective schools share high expectations for the whole-school community.

Expectations for students

Students need to:

- Participate in a positive manner,
- Ask for assistance when required,
- Treat others with respect and dignity,
- Support classmates and teachers,
- Value and respect school resources.

Expectations for teachers

Teachers need to:

- Make sure every student has an equal opportunity to participate and succeed in their learning,
- Create a stimulating and enjoyable learning environment in the classroom,
- Provide a wide range of resources to engage students,
- Listen to students and value their input,
- Listen to parents' insights into their children's learning,
- Use ICT to maximise the learning and assessment cycle.

Expectations for the principal

The principal needs to:

- Provide leadership for staff and students;
- Ensure staff, students and the wider community understand school expectations,
- Provide resources and equipment to assist teaching and learning,
- Ensure curriculum provides for the needs of all students with a range of needs,
- Encourage the participation of parents in the school.

Expectations for the assistant principals, student wellbeing and support staff

Assistant principals, student wellbeing and support staff need to:

- Ensure that they show understanding and care toward the students and parents they are supporting
- Demonstrate the importance of trust and confidentiality
- Offer support and advice to students and parents throughout the whole school day.

Expectations for parents/carers

Parents/carers need to

- Promote positive educational outcomes for their children by taking an active interest in their child's educational progress,
- Cooperate with the school and participate in regular and constructive communication with school staff regarding their child's learning and wellbeing,
- Actively support their child's engagement in the school environment.
- Support their children and ensure they attend school regularly, are prepared for the day and are on time. It is not 'ok to be away'.
- Communicate clearly with the school about the needs of their children, and work with the school to promote positive educational outcomes for them.
- Support the school by modelling positive behaviours and assisting their children with their school work.
- Cooperate with requests from the school.

School actions and consequences

Student engagement, regular attendance and appropriate behaviours are encouraged through the implementation of whole-school strategies supported by targeted and individualised support when required. Actions and consequences are developed in consultation with and agreed on by representatives from the whole-school community, including students. This fosters a cohesive and consistent response to poor attendance and inappropriate behaviour.

These actions and consequences are collectively agreed on and applied fairly and consistently to increase the likelihood that student connection to school is maintained. A priority is placed on issuing positive consequences for meeting high expectations.

Preston North East Primary School prohibits the use of corporal punishment.

Actions and consequences have an educational role and aim to foster positive relationships and retain the dignity of the student. Actions and consequences that isolate a student from learning are avoided wherever possible.

Student engagement, regular attendance and positive behaviours are supported most effectively through relationship based whole-school and classroom practices, including:

- establishing predictable, 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 enabling them to take responsibility and be involved in decision-making
- providing physical environments conducive to positive behaviours and effective engagement in learning
- implementing positive school-wide behaviour support strategies.

Inappropriate behaviours, including irregular attendance, are responded to through a staged response that has a prevention and early intervention, data-based focus, including:

- understanding the student
- ensuring a clear understanding of expectations by both students and teachers
- providing consistent school and classroom environments
- tailoring the student's learning program to their needs.

Broader support strategies include:

- involving and supporting the parents/ carers
- involving the student wellbeing coordinator
- tutoring/peer tutoring
- mentoring and/or counselling
- convening student support group meetings – the student support group is an important component of the staged response for students facing difficulty with engagement, attendance or behaviour
- developing individualised flexible learning, behaviour or attendance plans

Broader support strategies continued:

- providing broader educational programs
- involving community support agencies
- developing school facilities that optimise a culture of engagement.

Discipline procedures – suspension and expulsion

Students are encouraged to accept responsibility for their actions, and to participate fully and positively in their educational experience. These procedures comply with ministerial order 625 the details of which can be found at:

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/participation/Pages/studentengagementguidance.aspx>

Procedures for serious discipline issues

- Student discipline procedures for suspension are in place, in accordance with *Ministerial Order 625*, for instances where our early intervention and intervention strategies are not successful, or where an immediate suspension is the only appropriate course of action given the student's behaviour. Suspension is likely to be a consequence for continuous serious misconduct that is dangerous to the health and well-being of students and staff.
- In extreme cases the principal may elect to implement expulsion procedures in relation to a student, in accordance with the *Ministerial Order 625*.