

WESTERN ENGLISH LANGUAGE SCHOOL

STUDENT WELLBEING AND ENGAGEMENT POLICY



Help for non-English speakers

If you need help to understand the information in this policy, please contact the school on 9311 9325

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.

Western English Language School is committed to providing a safe, secure and stimulating learning environment for all newly arrived refugee and migrant students from language backgrounds other than English. We understand that students reach their full potential only when they are happy, healthy and safe, and that a positive school culture 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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2. School values, philosophy and vision
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POLICY

1. School profile

Western English Language School (WELS) was established in 2000 and is a multi-campus school in Melbourne's South Western Region. WELS delivers intensive English language programs as well as the

cultural information newly arrived refugee and migrant students need to perform successfully in mainstream schools. WELS enrolls between 460 and 550 students from Foundation to Year 10 for a period of 6 – 12 months so that they can gain the intensive skills in reading and writing in English ahead of transiting to their local primary or secondary schools.

WELS has approximately 100 school staff members including 20 multicultural education aides, a Primary Mental Health and Wellbeing Coordinator, and a Mental Health Practitioner for the secondary sector. Our P-10 and Administration Campus is situated in South Road Braybrook, which is well serviced by public transport. Students at the Braybrook Campus live locally and many ride their bikes to school and with some secondary students travelling from as far away as Melton.

Two WELS campuses are situated in Wyndham – the Wyndham Campus is located within the grounds of Wyndham Central College in Shaws Road, Werribee and has close links with the College. Manor Lakes site is situated on the corner of Scholar Drive and Howqua Way, within walking distance of Manor Lakes P-12 College.

WELS Footscray Campus is located within the grounds of Footscray City Primary School in Hyde Street, Footscray.

WELS St Albans Campus is located within the grounds of St Albans Primary School in West Esplanade, St Albans.

WELS Melton Campus is located in Raleighs Road, Melton within the grounds of Melton Primary School.

WELS commenced an online program to support newly arrived students in Melton primary schools during Term 4 2020 and the new Melton Campus opened in Term 3 2023.

Our school is culturally diverse with 100% of families having a language background other than English (LOTE). Language backgrounds change frequently, depending on the Federal Government's migrant and refugee intakes.

We strive to provide a nurturing, challenging and multiculturally supportive environment that empowers students to reach their personal best, both academically and socially.

2. School values, philosophy and vision

Western English Language 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 respect, responsibility and caring at every opportunity.

The vision of the Western English Language School (WELS) is to empower newly arrived students through the delivery of an excellent EAL curriculum and to assist in their future success through strong working relationships with educational providers in the West.

Our Statement of Values is available online at: [Statement of values and School philosophy](#)

Values: Respect, Responsibility and Caring

Respect

We show respect for the cultures and experiences of students and their families through knowledge and understanding of them in every interaction we have with them.

We show respect for colleagues by listening and actively supporting them - in the classroom, at meetings and by speaking well of them at all times.

We show respect for the community by working cooperatively with them.

Responsibility

We give students clear guidelines and models of good behaviour so that they know what is expected of them.

We invite parents to be part of the school.

We share duties with colleagues - curricular and extracurricular activities so that we are always cooperating with each other.

We involve ourselves in community activities so that new communities know that we support them.

Caring

We show compassion for students by understanding their backgrounds and by listening to them and actively supporting the WELS program.

We understand parents' backgrounds, cultures and experiences.

We empower our students and celebrate their strengths and successes. We recognise the different skills and experiences, both academic and non-academic, that they bring with them.

We listen to colleagues, understand and support them and acknowledge their differences.

We model and demonstrate care for each other, and take every opportunity to help others that may be in need.

3. Wellbeing and engagement strategies

Western English Language School has developed a range of strategies to promote engagement, positive behaviour and respectful relationships for all students in our school. 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.

The school provides a range of targeted proactive programs to support students' social and emotional development and create a positive climate for learning. This includes the Respectful Relationships Program, Human Relations and consent programs, and specific wellbeing programs and interventions.

A summary of the universal (whole of school), targeted (year group specific) and individual engagement strategies used by our school is included below:

Universal

- 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
- 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 Western English Language School use the Department's Pedagogical Model which includes FISO and HITS as well as the [School Wide Positive Behaviour Support Framework](#) to teach an explicit, common and shared model of instruction. This ensures that evidenced-based, high yield teaching practices are incorporated into all lessons.
- teachers at Western English Language 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 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 the school's bilingual Multicultural Education Aides, their teachers, Campus Coordinators, Assistant Principals and Principal whenever they have any questions or concerns.
- All students are welcome to self-refer to the Student Wellbeing Coordinators, Campus Coordinators, Classroom teachers, Homegroup teachers, 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*
 - *School-Wide Positive Behaviour Support*
 - *Safe Schools*
 - *Social Thinking Model*
- programs, incursions and excursions developed to address issue-specific behaviour (e.g. anger behaviour management programs)
- opportunities for student inclusion (i.e. sports teams, clubs, recess and lunchtime activities)
- buddy programs

Targeted

- each WELS class group has a class teacher or class teaching team who monitors the health and wellbeing of students in their class and refers issues to the leadership at their sites.
- Campus Coordinators act as a point of contact for students who may need additional support.
- At the Braybrook P-10 Campus, the Assistant Principal, Wellbeing Coordinator, Additional Assistance Coordinator (Secondary) and Language & Literacy Support Co-ordinator (Primary) follow up on students needing additional assistance.
- all students from Year 10 and above are assisted by the school's transition coordinators to develop a Career Action Plan with targeted goals and support to plan for their future
- all students in Out of Home Care are appointed a Learning Mentor, have an Individual Education Plan (IEP) and are referred to Student Support Services for an Educational Needs Assessment
- wellbeing and health staff undertake health promotion and social skills development in response to needs identified by student wellbeing data, classroom teachers or other school staff, each year
- all staff apply a trauma-informed approach to working with students who have experienced trauma (whole school Mental Health First Aid Training)
- we provide a positive and respectful learning environment for our students who identify as LGBTIQ+ and follow the Department's [LGBTIQ Student Support](#)

Individual

- Newly arrived refugee and migrant students are entitled to intensive English language classes with average class sizes of 13 for all students

- Multicultural education aides are timetabled into classes where individual learning needs are identified.
- Student Support Group (SSG) for students supported by the Disability Inclusion program
- SSGs for every child and young person in out-of-home care.
- Support for students at risk of attendance or behaviour related issues.
- Individual Education Plan and Behaviour Support Plans
- referral to Student Welfare Coordinator and Student Support Services
- referral to The Orange Door (DFFH), Headspace, Foundation House, Community Health and other external supports.
- [Navigator](#)
- [Lookout](#)

Western English Language School implements a range of strategies that support and promote individual engagement. These include:

- building positive and respectful relationships and/or a Behaviour Support Plan
- empowering students through acknowledging and validating skills and knowledge that they already have
- 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 [The Orange Door](#) (DFFH)
 - 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
- running regular Student Support Group meetings for all students:
 - with a disability
 - in Out of Home Care
 - and with other complex needs that require ongoing support and monitoring.

4. Identifying students in need of support

Western English Language School is committed to providing the necessary support to ensure our students are supported intellectually, emotionally and socially. Student Wellbeing staff at each WELS site play a significant role in developing and implementing strategies to help identify students in need of support and enhance student wellbeing.

Western English Language School utilises 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
- Information gained through meetings with parents & carers (primary sector's socio-linguistic profiles)
- 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, 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, staff and families are grounded in our school's Statement of Values and the [Student Code of Conduct](#). Student bullying behaviour will be responded to consistently with Western English Language School's [Bullying prevention policy and Code of Conduct](#). Homegroup and classroom teachers teach expectations consistently with assistance from bilingual multicultural education aides to ensure that newly arrived students clearly understand the expectations of the school.

When a student acts in breach of the behaviour standards of our school community, Western English Language School will institute a staged response, consistent with the Department's Student Engagement and Inclusion Guidelines. Where appropriate, parents will be informed about the inappropriate behaviour and the disciplinary action taken by teachers and other school staff.

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.

The school supports the use of restorative practices in our conversations and interactions with students. Restorative practices are a range of strategies that seek to repair relationships that have been damaged, including those damaged through bullying. It does this by bringing about a sense of remorse and restorative action on the part of the offender and forgiveness by the victim. This concept underpins our approach to behaviour management.

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 Campus Coordinators, Wellbeing personnel and Assistant Principals.
- restorative practices
- opportunities to reflect
- family meetings
- behaviour reviews
- 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 Western English Language 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

Western English Language 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, and as much as possible, through regular verbal communication with parents using the school's multicultural education aides, at parent meetings and at quarterly parent-teacher meetings across all WELS sites.

- 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

Western English Language 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 (for example through the SMT)
- school reports
- parent survey
- case management
- CASES21
- SOCS

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 in transition and enrolment packs

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:

- [Bullying Prevention Policy](#)
- [Child Safe Standards Policy](#)
- [Inclusion and diversity policy](#)

- Statement of values and School philosophy

POLICY REVIEW AND APPROVAL

Policy last reviewed	July 2023
Consultation	School Council 27 July 2023 SRC 27 July 2023 Parent consultation 27 July 2023 Wellbeing Team consultation 26 July 2023
Approved by	Principal, Laurence Guttman
Next scheduled review date	July 2025

This policy has a mandatory review cycle of 2 years.