POLICY TITLE: Student Engagement and Wellbeing Policy

DATE RATIFIED: 2011

REVIEW DATE: 2012

1. RATIONALE

The social, emotional and physical wellbeing of students is pivotal to their success at school and in their future lives. Essendon North Primary School endeavors to provide a healthy, supportive and secure environment for all students, to raise awareness of what makes students resilient, to develop strategies to reduce vulnerabilities, to build student and school connectedness, and to increase coping skills.

Essendon North Primary School is a place where positive relationships are built within a supportive environment that is fair, consistent and democratic. This approach focuses on recognizing the harm that has been caused to others by inappropriate behavior and provides an opportunity to repair that harm. This approach is also applied to incidents of serious harm. Everyone affected, including families, are provided with the opportunity to talk about what has happened, how they have been affected by it and what they want to happen to repair the harm that has been caused. This approach focuses on relationships and people, over and above the need for assigning blame and dispensing punitive punishment.

Our School Values are:

- **Integrity** – acting ethically and fairly at all times, ensuring consistency between words and actions. Upholding the school values in everything we do
- **Honesty** – always being truthful, fair and true to oneself and others
- **Cooperation** – working together, communicating effectively and supporting each other in a positive manner
- **Respect** – treating others with consideration, being courteous at all times and acknowledging the beliefs and rights of others
- **Responsibility** – taking ownership of our behavior and actions and setting a positive example for others

Our values form an integral part of daily school life, and are referred to by all teachers within the class context and also within the yard. Values Education is included within Personal Learning, and is aimed at addressing issues of wellbeing, getting along and other pro-social behaviors.

2. RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

2.1 Guiding principles
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.

2.2 Equal Opportunity
The Equal Opportunity Act 1995 sets out the types or grounds of discrimination that are unlawful and aims to promote community recognition and acceptance of the equality of men and women, and the equality of people of all races, regardless of their religious or political convictions, their impairments or their age.

2.3 The Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006
The Charter sets out a list of 20 rights that reflect the following four basic principles:
- Freedom
- Respect
- Equality
- Dignity

It is important to understand that with human rights comes a responsibility to respect other human rights. All DEECD employees must act compatibly with the Charter and give proper consideration to human rights when making decisions. Everyone should:
- Encourage compliance with the Charter
- Support others to act compatibly with the Charter, and
- Respect and promote human rights

Part of the monitoring of Human Rights will be to complete the Charter Compliance Checklist on the School Compliance web site.

2.4 Students with disabilities
The Disability Standards for Education 2005 clarify and make more explicit the obligations on schools and the rights of students under the Disability Discrimination Act 1992. The standards cover enrolment, participation, curriculum development, student support services, and harassment and victimisation.

An education provider must make ‘reasonable adjustments’ to accommodate a student with disability. An adjustment is a measure or action taken to assist a student with disability to participate in education and training on the same basis as other students. An adjustment is reasonable if it does this while taking into account the student’s learning needs and balancing the interests of all parties affected, including those of the student with the disability, the education provider, staff and other students.

In determining whether an adjustment is reasonable, an education provider should take into account information about:
- the nature of the student’s disability
- his or her preferred adjustment
- any adjustments that have been provided previously
- any recommended or alternative adjustments.
This information might come from the student, an associate of the student, independent experts, or a combination of these people.

An education provider should ensure that the student, or an associate of the student, has timely information about the processes for determining whether the proposed adjustment would cause unjustifiable hardship to the provider. The provider should also ensure that these processes maintain the dignity, respect, privacy and confidentiality of the student and the associates of the student, consistent with the rights of the rest of the community.

The provider may consider all likely costs and benefits, both direct and indirect, for the provider, the student and any associates of the student, and any other persons in the learning or wider community, including:

- costs associated with additional staffing, providing special resources or modifying the curriculum
- costs resulting from the student’s participation in the learning environment, including any adverse impact on learning and social outcomes for the student, other students and teachers
- benefits of the student’s participation in the learning environment, including positive learning and social outcomes for the student, other students and teachers, and
- any financial incentives, such as subsidies or grants, available to the provider if the student participates.

The DDA and the Education Standards do not require changes to be made if this would impose unjustifiable hardship to a person or organisation.

2.5 Bullying and harassment

**Definitions**

*Harassment* is any verbal, physical or sexual conduct (including gestures) which is uninvited, unwelcome or offensive to a person.

*Bullying* is repeated oppression, physical or psychological, of a less powerful person by a more powerful person or group.

*Cyber-bullying* is a form of bullying which is carried out through an internet service such as email, chat room, discussion group, online social networking, instant messaging or web pages. It can also include bullying through mobile phone technologies such as SMS. It may involve text or images (photos, drawings). Examples of cyber-bullying behaviour are:

- teasing and being made fun of
- spreading of rumours online
- sending unwanted messages
- defamation

Cyber-bullying can happen to anyone and the bully can act anonymously if they want. People can also be bullied online by groups of people such as class groups or collective members of an online community.
It is important for the school to provide a safe and friendly environment for students and staff and to encourage care, courtesy and respect for others. All persons have a legal right to protection from harassment under the Commonwealth Sex Discrimination Act and the Victorian Equal Opportunity Act.

The effects of harassment or bullying include
- poor health – anxiety, depression
- lower self esteem
- reduced study performance
- missed classes, social withdrawal
- reduced career prospects

If a student sees another person being harassed or bullied they should tell the person that you witnessed the incident and advise them to report it to an appropriate person. However, if your friend is harassing another person, let them know that their behaviour is unacceptable. Bystanders who do nothing to stop bullying may be contributing to the problem by providing an audience for the bully. Harassment is usually directed at a person because of their gender, race, creed or abilities. It can be subtle or explicit.

**Subtle: (The most common)**
They include:
- Offensive staring and leering.
- Unwanted comments about physical appearance and sexual preference.
- Racist or smutty comments or jokes.
- Questions about another’s sexual activity.
- Persistent comments about a person’s private life or family.
- Physical contact e.g. purposely brushing up against another’s body.
- Offensive name calling.

**Explicit: (obvious)**
They include:
- Grabbing, aggressive hitting, pinching and shoving etc.
- Unwelcome patting, touching, embracing.
- Repeated requests for dates, especially after refusal.
- Offensive gestures, jokes, comments, letters, phone calls or e-mail.
- Sexually and/or racially provocative remarks.
- Displays of sexually graphic material – pornography.
- Requests for sexual favours.

Extreme forms of sexual harassment will lead to criminal prosecution.

**Bullying can involve such things as:**
- grabbing, aggressive staring, hitting, pinching kicking, pushing and shoving.
- publicly excluding a person from your group
- taking or breaking a person’s property
- knocking a person’s books or belongings out of their hands or off their desk
Cyberbullying
Being involved in online spaces – either at home or at school - requires students to behave responsibly. This includes:

- the language you use and the things you say
- how you treat others
- respecting people’s property (eg copyright)
- visiting appropriate places.

Behaving safely online means:

- protecting your own privacy and personal information (we used to call it ‘stranger danger’)
- selecting appropriate spaces to work and contribute
- protecting the privacy of others (this can be sharing personal information or images)
- being proactive in letting someone know if there is something is 'not quite right'. At home this would be a parent or carer, at school a teacher.

If you are being harassed or bullied you should:

- Tell the person you don’t like what they are doing and you want them to stop.
- Discuss the matter with a student leader or a teacher/coordinator that you feel comfortable with.

Your concerns will be taken seriously. All complaints will be treated confidentially.

Rights and Responsibilities of Students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rights</th>
<th>Responsibilities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Students have a right to:</td>
<td>Students have a responsibility to:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- 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</td>
<td>- Participate fully in the school’s educational program and to attend regularly. Students should also be expected to display positive behaviours that demonstrate respect for themselves, their peers, their teachers and all other members of the school community.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Participate fully in the school’s educational program</td>
<td>- Demonstrate respect for the rights of others, including the right to learn, will contribute to an engaging educational experience for themselves and other students.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- As students progress through school they will be encouraged and supported to take greater responsibility for their own learning and participation as members of the whole school community. This involves developing as individual learners who increasingly manage their own learning and growth by setting goals</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Creating a community of life-long learners

and managing resources to achieve these goals.

- Students should, with support, be expected to participate fully in the school’s educational program and to attend regularly. Students should also display positive behaviours that demonstrate respect for themselves, their peers, their teachers and all other members of the school community.

Rights and Responsibilities of Parents/Carers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rights</th>
<th>Responsibilities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parents/carers have a right to expect that their children will be educated in a secure environment in which care, courtesy and respect for the rights of others are encouraged</td>
<td>Parents/carers have a responsibility to:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Promote positive educational outcomes for their children by taking an active interest in their child’s educational progress and by modeling positive behaviours.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Ensure their child’s regular attendance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Engage in regular and constructive communication with school staff regarding their child’s learning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Support the school in maintaining a safe and respectful learning environment for all students.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Rights and Responsibilities of Teachers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rights</th>
<th>Responsibilities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teachers have a right to</td>
<td>Teachers have a responsibility to:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Fairly, reasonably and consistently, implement the engagement policy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Know how students learn and how to teach them effectively.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Know the content they teach.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Know their students.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Plan and assess for effective learning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Create and maintain safe and challenging learning environments.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Use a range of teaching strategies and resources to engage students in effective learning.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2.6 Shared Expectations

Effective schools share high expectations for the whole-school community. Shared expectations are:
Schools – principals, teachers and school staff
Schools have a responsibility to provide an educational environment that ensures that all students are valued and cared for, feel they are part of the school, and can engage effectively in their learning and experience success.

School expectations include:
- Inclusive teaching practices
- Accessible educational provision for all students
- Parent/carer partnerships and liaison
- Community partnerships which engage families and the community in ways that support student achievement and success
- Provision of appropriate student services
- Development and provision of appropriate, relevant and challenging curriculum that gives students the opportunity to experience success in their learning.

Diversity in the school community
The school aims to address diversity by:
- Maintaining a highly skilled, motivated and energetic workforce who are better able to meet the needs of a diverse school community
- Attracting highly skilled and diverse staff making the school a preferred employer
- Increasing the range of knowledge, skills and experiences available in the workforce
- Enhancing the capacity for effective decision-making due to the greater diversity of perspectives and inputs
- Creating more effective work teams due to increased participation levels and an increased capacity to solve problems.

3. SCHOOL ACTIONS AND CONSEQUENCES
Student engagement, regular attendance and positive behaviours will be supported 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 where appropriate for individual students
- Consistently acknowledging all students
- Empowering students by creating multiple opportunities for them to take responsibility and be involved in decision-making
- Providing physical environments conducive to positive behaviours and effective engagement in learning

Inappropriate behaviours, including irregular attendance, will be responded to through a staged response, in accordance with the school’s Community Code of Conduct and
the Victorian DEECD’s guidelines.

4. LINKS AND APPENDICES:

- ENPS Acceptable ICT and Internet Use Policy
- ENPS Community Code of Conduct
- ENPS Equal Opportunity Policy

5. COMMUNICATION and EVALUATION

A copy of this policy and the associated planning documents will be provided to all staff annually.

The Student Engagement and Wellbeing Policy, and the associated Codes of Conduct, will be widely promoted to all students, staff, parents/carers and the local community. This policy will be reviewed annually and ratified by school council.