



STUDENT WELLBEING AND ENGAGEMENT POLICY

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.

Nepean 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 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. Engagement strategies
4. Identifying students in need of support
5. Student rights and responsibilities
6. Student behavioural expectations
7. Engaging with families
8. Evaluation

POLICY

1. School profile

Nepean School was established in 1925, as State School No. 4290 at Hampton Convalescent Hospital. In 1929 the school was transferred to a new site at Mount Eliza, as part of the Royal Children's Hospital caring for children with tuberculosis, osteomyelitis and poliomyelitis. From 1942 to 1944, during the war, the hospital was handed over to the American Army and the school site was temporarily transferred

to Burnham Beeches, a large country house in Sherbrooke. As the number of post-polio patients declined, the student population was replaced by children with different disabilities such as spinal deformities, cerebral palsy, spina bifida and congenital hip dislocation. Numbers steadily grew and there became an obvious need for a purpose built special school to be established as a separate day school. By then students were being transported from as far as Sorrento and Mentone. The name Nepean was chosen as most of the taxis picked up the students along Nepean Highway. Nepean School was opened at its present site in Seaford in December 1980.

Nepean School is located approximately 50 kilometres south east of Melbourne. Nepean School currently has approximately 130 students from 5 to 18 years, and approximately 100 staff members including, teachers, physiotherapists, speech pathologists, occupational therapists, music therapists, registered nurses, wellbeing officers and education support staff, working in a transdisciplinary teaming model to meet the learning and therapy needs of students.

Our school is growing in cultural diversity with approximately 25% of families having a language background other than English. We are proud of our diversity and inclusive school community.

We strive to provide a centre of excellence for students with physical disabilities and complex health impairments.

2. School values, philosophy and vision

Our Vision

Nepean Scholl provides an innovative and supportive learning environment for students with physical disabilities and complex health needs. We are committed to working with students towards their individualised learning goals to realise their potential. We aim to instil confidence and resilience in students to support them in accessing rewarding life experiences and a meaningful place in society.

- Our Values
- Excellence and best practice in learning and teaching
- A sense of belonging through social connectedness
- Creating and celebrating success together
- Teamwork and perseverance
- Respect
- Communication and empowerment
- Independence and a strong sense of self
- Equity

3. Engagement strategies

Promoting a Positive Learning Community at Nepean

At Nepean the **building and nurturing of positive relationships** lies at the heart of our work implicit in this is the use a restorative approach in Promoting Positive Behaviours. We seek to value and support those involved **scaffolding a positive pathway** so that

students feel empowered to **take positive action** to address each situation and move forward.

This is achieved through:

- **Resilience, Right and Respectful Relationships (RRRR)** program and
- **School Wide Positive Behavior Support (SW-PBS)** framework

Resilience, Right and Respectful Relationships (RRRR)

The Resilience, Rights and Respectful Relationships program is designed to develop students' social, emotional and positive relationship skills.

Efforts to promote social and emotional skills and positive gender norms in children and young people has been shown to improve health related outcomes and subjective wellbeing. It also reduces antisocial behaviours including engagement in gender related violence.

It covers eight topics of Social and Emotional Learning across all levels.

Emotional Literacy, personal Strengths; Positive Coping; Problem Solving; Stress Management; Help Seeking; Gender and Identity; and Positive Gender Relationships

Our whole School Primary Prevention Strategies

These all form part of our **SW-PBS Tier 1 Strategies** which aim to nurture our happy healthy and harmonious School family.

These include:

- Use of **High Impact Teaching Strategies** (best practice) of Setting Goals structuring Lessons, Explicit Teaching, Worked Examples, Collaborative Learning, Multiple Exposures, Questioning, Feedback, Metacognitive Strategies, Differentiated Teaching as part of **Visible Learning**.
- Some **Positive Learning Solution teaching strategies** (Applied Behaviour Analysis)
- Instruction & PROMPT-Response-Reinforce or Corrective Feedback. Learning Styles
- Goal Setting, Task Analysis, Generalisation
- Developing **individualised programs** for students with personalised goals
- Celebrating and **acknowledging each "small step"** a child makes in their development
- Providing a **stimulating and relevant educational program** that grows with the child
- Supporting and caring for each other
- Establishing **Classroom Agreements** based school values and school rules
- **Positive promotion** of students work through displays photographs and art galleries
- Providing opportunities for **student participation in decision making** through an active Student Representative Council
- Promoting healthy eating and healthy lifestyle programs
- **Communicating** regularly with parents

- Colourful, newsletter full of photographs of students and **information about programs**
- **Special events** such as the Primary Concert, Secondary Production, whole school activity days, school ball and graduations
- Inviting others to be a part of our **school community** for example local primary and secondary schools
- Building **Community Partnerships** for example Duke of Edinburgh
- Maintaining attractive safe and purposeful school facilities
- Whole school assemblies lead by the students with award presentations and sharing and learning
- Opportunities to **celebrate and share** achievements

Positive Acknowledgement

Nepean School acknowledges students who meet our shared expectations through recognition and encouragement

This is a part of our **Tier 1 Strategies** in the **School Wide Positive Behaviour Support** framework

We do this through:

- Positive feedback and reinforcement of positive behaviours
- Certificates at weekly assemblies
- Reports
- Newsletters
- Student Support Group meetings
- Leadership opportunities and positions of responsibility
- Awards
- The right to represent the school

Targeted

Additional Support Strategies

High Student: Staff Ratios:

We pride ourselves on our high staff to student ratio which assists us in facilitating rich education experiences for our students. There is also an overlay of ES staff that provide assistance where extra support is needed across the programs. This enables us to maximise student learning and meet individualised learning needs.

Individual Learning Plans:

Each of our students has an individual Learning Plan that is designed by the transdisciplinary team in consultation with the student (where possible) and their family.

Therapy and Transdisciplinary Support for Learning:

We have a transdisciplinary team of professionals: Educators, Physiotherapist, Occupational Therapist, Speech Pathologist, Music Therapist, Student Welfare Officer and Registered Nurse working together to support students to access the curriculum and achieve their individual goals. Therapy support within active learning is directed to meet the whole needs of the child. Additional support for adaptive equipment is provided as well as pre/post-surgery support and rehabilitation.

We work closely with our families in supporting students who are hospitalised or missing significant amounts of school due to ongoing medical needs by

Sensory Programs:

Many of our students access a sensory approach as part of their program. Sensory programs are developed in consultation with an Occupational Therapist, based on a sensory assessment. Through the active inclusion of a sensory program as part of their educational program, many children are better able to learn and reach their goals.

Hands on/experiential Learning:

Many of our students are best able to learn and retain knowledge when they have access to active hands on learning. Due to this we have a strong emphasis on active learning across the school.

Fifteen Plus Programs:

We work actively to ensure that students who are over fifteen have the opportunity to experience a program with a post school and vocational focus. These students may have access to Duke of Edinburgh, VCAL and a number of work based and leadership programs.

Consultation with medical professionals, community agencies, external support agencies to support students' individual needs.

Transitions:

A planned and supportive transition process at the start of school, transition from primary to secondary departments and supported transition from school to post school life.

Family Support:

Our Parent Liaison worker facilitates regular parent and carer **support group meetings** and may also include information sessions, outings and working bees for special projects.

Professional Learning:

Teacher, therapist and ES professional learning are given high priority at Nepean School to ensure the strategies and approaches adopted are up to date with current research and evidence and are implemented systematically across the school.

Individual

- Student Support Groups, see:
<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/participation/pages/supportgroups.aspx>
- Individual Learning Plan and Behaviour Support Plan
- Program for Students with Disabilities
- referral to Student Welfare Coordinator and Student Support Services
- referral to ChildFirst, Headspace
- Navigator
- Lookout

School Wide Positive Behaviour Support (SW-PBS)

- Is a **whole school approach** to preventing and responding to behaviours of concern rather than simply focusing on the management of consequences
- is a **framework that primarily focuses on school-wide prevention**
- Incorporates **intensive individualised support**, for those students with more extreme behavioural and/or emotional needs.

SW-PBS is a framework to:

- **prevent** behaviours of concern,
- **reward** students who behave appropriately and
- Decide how to deal with behaviour after careful consideration of the factors that might **explain its cause**.

SW-PBS is a three-tiered approach and a continuum of school-wide instructional and positive behaviour support strategies that are applicable at three levels.

Tier 1 strategies are also called **primary prevention strategies** and are implemented across all settings within our school.

Tier 2 consists of **secondary level prevention strategies** for students at risk of complex behaviours and:

- require **Positive Learning Solution teaching strategies**
 - Instruction & Prompt-Response-Reinforce or Corrective Feedback.
Learning Styles
 - Goal Setting, Task Analysis, Generalisation
- are often group-based intervention strategies for teaching students pro-social skills and self-management skills

Tier 3 the emphasis is on using **tertiary level prevention strategies** which apply to **students with extremely challenging behaviours**.

This includes identifying the function of their behaviour, then, **teaching them a functionally equivalent replacement behaviour which would be less disruptive or dangerous than their current behaviour**.

The focus is on **how you can adjust the contingencies in your school or classroom**, to prevent the problem behaviour from arising in the first place. For example:

- ensuring that the curriculum matches the students' needs
- ensuring that all students are actively engaged in stimulating, interesting and moderately challenging activities
- maintaining appropriate levels of noise, light and room temperature, and
- Providing opportunities for 'escape', if required.

- referencing **trauma informed school practice** if applicable to a student's personal history
- requires creating an **Individualised Behaviour Plan** including the process of Functional Behavioural Assessment – Hypothesis – Implementation of Plan – Monitoring & Evaluation

Underlying the implementation of these frameworks is our culture and practice of:

- providing safety, security, consistency and predictable **routines**
- ensuring students have **access to communication** and opportunities to talk about relationships and emotions using individualised communication systems
- **empowering and enabling** our students
- **consultation and collaboration**
- **explicit teaching**
- promoting a **value laden environment**
- **building a partnership** with parents and carers
- promoting an environment where **peer support** is valued
- Providing **positive adult modelling**.

An **individualised approach** is used in **Promoting Positive Behaviour** with all students, taking into consideration their individual needs, medical diagnosis, disability, sensory needs and challenging situations that may be taking place in their lives and with the aim to **increase the students positive behaviour, participation and inclusion**.

- 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
- 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

4. Identifying students in need of 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
- engagement with families

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:

- Learn and socialise without interference or intimidation in a safe and secure environment
- Be treated with respect and fairness as individuals
- Access the Victorian Curriculum and have an individual Learning Plan (ILP) that meets their learning needs

Students have the responsibility to:

- Be prepared to learn
- Respect the rights of others
- Adhere to the school rules

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.

6. Student behavioural expectations

Behavioural expectations of students, staff and families are grounded in our school's Statement of Values. Student bullying behaviour will be responded to consistently with Nepean School's Bullying policy.

When a student acts in breach of the behaviour standards of our school community, Example 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.

- *Join in at school in a positive way and strive for personal best*
- *Treat classmates/teachers with respect and dignity*
- *Value school resources*
- *Support classmates*
- *Play and work safely at all times*
- *Follow our school rules*
- *Demonstrate our school values*

Responses to Behaviours

1. Disruptive behaviours

When behaviours of concern occur, we follow the **Responses to Behaviour flowchart** and assess whether the action is a **Minor or Major Behaviour**. This flowchart then outlines the necessary course of action to be taken according to Tier 1, Tier 2 or Tier 3 strategies.

2. Interpersonal difficulties

Our restorative approach is about being **respectful** of every member of our school community, **encouraging responsible behaviour** and actions and ensuring that **personal pride and dignity is maintained**.

RRRR program works at the Tier 1 level supporting the growth of our supportive whole school culture and in developing all students' social skills.

At the Tier 2 level, more specific social skills training may be implemented.

At the Tier 3 level, individual 1:1 programs are implemented.

Restorative practice is a strategy that seeks 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.

The restorative approach is used to address student behaviour in various levels to:

- re-establish significant relationships
- ensure consequences for misbehaviour are relevant and meaningful
- foster and develop individual responsibility and empathy
- Suspension and expulsion procedures are the most severe reaction that a school can take and will only be used as a last resort

7. Engaging with families

Nepean 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.
- Parent Liaison Officer

8. Evaluation

Nepean 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
- SOCS

FURTHER INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

Related policies including *Statement of Values and School Philosophy, Bullying Prevention, Child Safe Standards*

REVIEW CYCLE

This policy was last updated on October 2018 and is scheduled for review in October 2022.