A bird with a beak and a bow

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|  | Gowrie Street Primary School Shepparton |  |
| Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy | | |

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|  | Help for non-English speakers If you need help to understand the information in this policy, please contact Gowrie Street Primary School Shepparton on 03 5821 3100 or gowrie.street.ps.shepparton@education.vic.gov.au. |

# Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that all students and members of our school community understand:

1. our commitment to providing a safe and supportive learning environment for students
2. expectations for positive student behaviour
3. support available to students and families
4. our school’s policies and procedures for responding to inappropriate student behaviour.

Gowrie Street Primary School Shepparton 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.

# Contents

1. School profile
2. School values, philosophy and vision
3. Wellbeing and 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

## School profile

Gowrie Street Primary School is a vibrant and inclusive learning community guided by the vision: *“We are a community that takes strength from who we are: our cultures, our histories, our diversity. We will empower our students to seize life's opportunities and overcome its challenges.”* The school’s core values—Determination, Empathy, Excellence, and Pride—shape its educational programs, fostering sense of purpose, kindness, high expectations, and a strong sense of belonging among students. Located in Shepparton, Victoria, Gowrie Street Primary School serves a diverse student population in a regional setting. The school is committed to providing a nurturing and inclusive environment where all students can thrive.

The school was led by a Principal and an Assistant Principal, supported by two Leading Teachers specialising in Numeracy and Disability Inclusion and a Learning Specialist for Literacy.  There were 16 Classroom Teachers delivering our whole school, targeted and engaging curriculum programs, and four Learning Tutors.  Additionally, 21 Education Support Staff played a vital role in student learning and wellbeing, including Wellbeing Leaders, a Business Manager, Office Administration staff, and a Play Therapist.

The school also operates an on-site kindergarten service for three- and four-year-old children, staffed by three experienced early childhood educators. This service supports early learning and smooth transitions into primary school, reinforcing the school’s commitment to lifelong learning and connection to our community.

Gowrie Street Primary School supports a diverse student body, including a significant proportion of students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. The school prioritises equity and inclusion, ensuring all students, regardless of background, receive quality education and holistic support. Many students face social disadvantage, and the school actively addresses these challenges through tailored wellbeing initiatives and community partnerships.

The school is distinguished by its strong commitment to student welfare and community engagement. Providing all the food students need to eat each day through our healthy eating program, our extensive well-being services including Paediatric clinic and Play Therapy, and tailored intervention strategies, help students overcome barriers to learning. Through our values-driven approach, Gowrie Street Primary School continues to empower students to achieve their full potential.

## School values, philosophy and vision

At Gowrie Street Primary School Shepparton, our Statement of Values and School Philosophy is at the heart of everything we do and forms the strong foundation of our thriving school community. Together, students, staff, and families bring our core values of Determination, Excellence, Empathy and Pride to life, creating a culture where these qualities are seen, celebrated, and practised every day.

Our vision is to empower every student to discover and achieve their personal best, building on their strengths and talents. We are committed to equipping our learners with the knowledge, skills, and confidence to flourish as happy, healthy, and capable young people who make a positive difference in their communities and beyond.

Our Statement of Values is available online at https://www.gowriestps.vic.edu.au/

## Wellbeing and engagement strategies

Gowrie Street Primary School Shepparton 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

* High and consistent expectations of all staff, students and parents and carers
* Prioritising 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 and that embraces and celebrates diversity and empowers all students to participate and feel valued
* 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 Gowrie Street Primary School Shepparton use the Victorian Teaching and Learning Model 2.0 instructional framework to ensure an explicit, common and shared model of instruction to ensure that evidenced-based, high yield teaching practices are incorporated into all lessons
* Teachers at Gowrie Street Primary School Shepparton 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 and School Philosophy 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 support students moving into different stages of their schooling
* Acknowledging positive behaviour and student achievement in the classroom, and formally in school assemblies and communication to parents
* Monitoring 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 Junior School Council and other forums. Students are also encouraged to speak with their teachers, Wellbeing Leader, Assistant Principal and Principal whenever they have any questions or concerns.
* Creating opportunities for cross-age connections amongst students through mixed age activity days, athletics, music programs and buddy programs
* All students are welcome to self-refer to the Student Wellbeing Leader 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
  + Friendology
  + Restorative Practices including our partnership with Real Schools
  + Anti Racism education
* Programs, incursions and excursions developed to address issue specific needs or behaviour
* Opportunities for student inclusion (i.e. sports teams, clubs, recess and lunchtime activities)
* Buddy programs
* Measures are in place to empower our school community to identify, report and address inappropriate and harmful behaviours such as racism, homophobia and other forms of discrimination or harassment.

### 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 – refer to our Aboriginal, Learning, Wellbeing, Safety Policy for further information
* Our English as a second language students are supported through our targeted small groups for learning, and all cultural and linguistically diverse students are supported to feel safe and included in our school including through strategies in our Inclusion and Diversity Policy
* 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 LGBTIQA+ and follow the Department’s policy on [*LGBTIQA+ Student Support*](https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/lgbtiq-student-support/policy) and strategies included in our Inclusion and Diversity Policy
* All students in Out of Home Care are supported in accordance with the Department’s policy on [*Supporting Students in Out-of-Home Care*](https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/supporting-students-out-home-care/policy) 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*](https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/students-disability/policy), 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
* Students enrolled under the Department’s international student program are supported in accordance with our legal obligations and Department policy and guidelines at: [*International Student Program*](https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/international-student-program/guidance/supporting-students-learning-and-engagement-section-7)

### Individual

Gowrie Street Primary School Shepparton 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
* Developing an [Individual Learning Plan](https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/individual-education-plans-ieps/policy) and/or a [Behaviour Support Plan](https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/behaviour-students/guidance/behaviour-support-plans)
* Considering if any environmental changes need to be made, for example changing the classroom set-up
* Referring the student to:
* School-based wellbeing supports, including school Paediatric Clinic and GP service
* [*Student Support Services*](https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/student-support-services/policy)
* Appropriate external supports such as council-based youth and family services, other allied health professionals, [Headspace](https://www.vic.gov.au/enhancing-mental-health-support-schools), child and adolescent mental health services or The Orange Door or CAMHS
* 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](https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/student-support-groups/policy) meetings for all students:
* with a disability- [Program for Students with Disabilities](https://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/teachers/learningneeds/Pages/psd.aspx)
* in Out of Home Care- [LOOKOUT](https://www.vic.gov.au/lookout-education-support-centres)
* with other complex needs that require ongoing support and monitoring.

## Identifying students in need of support

Gowrie Street Primary School Shepparton 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. Gowrie Street Primary School Shepparton will utilise 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
* 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

## 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, racism, 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.

## Student behavioural expectations

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 this policy. Bullying will be managed in accordance with our Bullying Prevention Policy.

When a student acts in breach of the behaviour standards of our school community, Gowrie Street Primary School Shepparton 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:

* Reteaching appropriate behaviour
* Giving feedback to student that their behaviour is not in line with expectations.
* teacher controlled consequences such as moving a student in a classroom or other reasonable and proportionate responses to misbehaviour
* referral to the Principal
* restorative practices
* behaviour support and intervention meetings
* 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.

The Principal of Gowrie Street Primary School Shepparton 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.

## Engaging with families

Gowrie Street Primary School Shepparton 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 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.

## Evaluation

Gowrie Street Primary School Shepparton 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/carer survey
* case management
* CASES21 and COMPASS, including attendance and absence data
* SOCS

Gowrie Street Primary School Shepparton 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](https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/suspensions/guidance/1-suspension-process)
* [Expulsions – Decision](https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/expulsions/guidance/decision)

# Further information and resources

The following Department of Education policies are relevant to this Student Engagement and Wellbeing Policy:

* [Attendance](https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/attendance/policy)
* [Student Engagement](https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/student-engagement/policy)
* [Child Safe Standards](https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/child-safe-standards/policy)
* [Supporting Students in Out-of-Home Care](https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/supporting-students-out-home-care/policy)
* [Students with Disability](https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/students-disability/policy)
* [LGBTIQA+ Student Support](https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/lgbtiq-student-support/policy)
* [Behaviour – Students](https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/behaviour-students/policy)
* [Suspensions](https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/suspensions/policy)
* [Expulsions](https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/expulsions/policy)
* [Restraint and Seclusion](https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/restraint-seclusion/policy)

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
* Statement of Values and School Philosophy

# Policy REVIEW and Approval

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| Policy last reviewed | September 2025 |
| Consultation | School Council Consultation 17/09/2025  Parent email for consultation 8/9/2025  Newsletter for community 12/9/25  Staff consultation polices emailed 16/09/25 |
| Approved by | Principal |
| Next scheduled review date | Before September 2027 |