

# *Student Engagement Policy*

## **Avondale Primary School**



*Avondale Primary School is committed to safety and wellbeing of all children. This will be the primary focus of our care and decision making. Avondale Primary School has zero tolerance for child abuse.*

*Avondale Primary School is committed to providing a child safe environment where children and young people are safe, and their voices are heard about decisions that affect their lives. Particular attention will be paid to the cultural safety of Aboriginal children and children from culturally and / or linguistically diverse backgrounds, as well as the safety of children with a disability.*

*Every person involved in Avondale Primary School has a responsibility to understand the important and specific role he/ she plays individually and collectively to ensure that the wellbeing and safety of all children and young people is at the forefront of all they do and every decision they make.*

### **1. SCHOOL PROFILE**

Avondale Primary School is located in Clarendon St, Avondale Heights, less than 12km from the Melbourne CBD. After 56 years the suburb is currently going through a renewal phase with many young families now moving back into the area. Over the last 10 years the school has grown steadily and in 2016 enrollments stand at 355 students with 15 classes.

Our school community is multicultural, with over 20 different languages spoken at home, represented at the school. A significant number of parents formerly attended the school as children and the school is held in high regard within the community. Avondale Primary School is a friendly, caring and reflective learning community that is committed to striving for learning excellence. Our philosophy is based upon the premise that students can attain high levels of academic achievement and be responsible community members.

The students are offered a broad general curriculum that also includes specialist classes in P.E, LOTE and ART. We aim to promote in every student the desire to achieve, self-confidence, social skills and personal pride. Avondale student academic results have been consistently above similar schools and often at or above the state results. The community prides itself on our students' academic achievement.

The Avondale staff is a hard-working and dedicated team who are committed to improving their pedagogy and sharing exemplary practice across the school. Teachers plan in teams and seek to meet the learning needs of each student by responding effectively to assessment data.

### **2. RATIONALE**

Avondale Primary School is committed to providing every student with a safe, happy and motivating learning environment. We recognise that student engagement and connection to our school underpins effective student learning.

All teachers plan and work towards providing a stimulating learning environment within which students are motivated and accept an increasing responsibility for their own learning. We have a proud academic record and staff work to ensure that every student is able to reach their own full potential - academically, socially and emotionally.

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As well as a commitment to challenging high achieving students, the school provides intervention programs for students who require support. We employ a range of processes to identify and intervene early when a student is at risk of disengaging from learning or is unable to participate fully in mainstream classes.

Parents have an obligation to support the school in its efforts to implement our student engagement policy in a fair and consistent manner.

This document assists students, parents and staff to have a clear understanding of the school's expectations in terms of their own behaviour, their rights and responsibilities and that their behaviour should reflect the school values.

### **3. POLICY STATEMENT**

Avondale Primary School is committed to providing a safe, secure and consistent learning environment for all students. The Avondale Student Engagement Policy reflects this school's community aspirations, Ministerial Order 625, the *Equal Opportunity Act 2010* (Vic) the *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006* (Vic) and the Education Training Reform (School Attendance) Regulations 2013. The staff at Avondale Primary School will work collectively to ensure that students feel valued, cared for and have meaningful opportunities to contribute to the school. Staff work to effectively engage students with their learning and to reach their educational potential. We acknowledge that wellbeing and student learning outcomes are closely linked.

Avondale Primary School is a learning community that seeks to maximise student learning potential and actively promotes an enthusiasm for learning.

We aim to develop students academically, physically, socially and emotionally.

At Avondale Primary School we share the values of:

- Respect
- Honesty
- Persistence
- Integrity
- Cooperation
- Self confidence
- Caring for others
- Helpfulness

Avondale Primary School supports student engagement and encourages positive behaviour, attendance and participation in all areas of the curriculum.

Our guiding principles are that:

- All members of the school community (students, staff and parents) have rights as and responsibilities
- All members of the school community are valued and should be treated with respect
- All students have a right to access all of the curriculum and to use the resources, regardless of gender, culture, disability or socio-economic status

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- All students are responsible and accountable for their choice of behaviour
- Students learn best when they have a strong sense of belonging to the school
- Students learn and play best in a secure and safe environment free from intimidation, harassment, bullying or violence
- Staff implement fair and consistent rules and consequences negotiated with students
- Staff implement effective student management strategies and reinforce positive behaviour
- Teachers, including visiting and replacement teachers, should expect to work in a safe and cooperative environment
- Parents will work in partnership with the school to maintain a productive and safe teaching and learning environment
- The principal and staff have an obligation to be fair, reasonable, consistent and act in accordance with DET regulations.

#### **4. RESPONSIBILITIES**

##### **Definition**

Responsibilities, in a school setting, are things that we are responsible for as part of our roles. Some responsibilities are things we do for others and some we do for ourselves. All members of the school community have responsibilities for themselves and others.

##### **School Responsibilities**

At Avondale Primary School positive and respectful relationships between teachers, parents and students are valued. We continually work to establish a learning community that provides multiple and diverse opportunities for students to experience success.

##### ***Avondale Primary School has the responsibility to:***

- Uphold the right of every child to receive a quality education
- Implement a fair and respectful whole-school behaviour management approach
- Provide multiple opportunities for parents/carers and members of the broader community to play an active part in the life of the school through active groups such as school council, fundraising, education subcommittee, canteen and parent volunteer groups
- Implement a curriculum that includes positive social values and behaviour, enables students to acquire knowledge and skills, value diversity and build a culture of learning, community and engagement
- Implement a curriculum that is responsive to the needs of all students, including those who require support as well as those who need to be extended and challenged
- Develop meaningful relationships with students and families that promote well-being, engagement and learning.
- Support families so they may engage in their child's learning and build capacity as active learners
- Establish social/emotional and educational support for vulnerable students and monitor and evaluate progress. The school will achieve this through the development of Individual Learning Improvement Plans and regular Student Support Group (SSG) Meetings
- Ensure the school complies with all duty of care obligations, as identified in the Charter of Human Rights and Education & Training Reform Act 2006.

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### **Family Responsibilities**

Families play an important role in developing a child's attitude towards school. Research indicates that by being supportive of, and interested in their children's education families help maximise learning.

#### *Family's assist student engagement by:*

- Modelling positive behaviours and promoting respectful relationships
- Ensuring daily, on time student attendance
- Taking an interest in their children's learning
- Communicating constructively with the school
- Supporting school staff to maintain a safe learning environment
- Treating all members of the school community with respect

### **Student Responsibilities**

Students are members of our school community and the way they interact and behave is important to creating an engaging environment that is safe, happy and productive.

#### *Students have the responsibility to:*

- Comply with all school rules and values
- Behave in a safe and responsible manner
- Actively participate and engage in the school curriculum
- Respect other members of the school community
- Not disrupt the learning of others
- Support each other's learning
- Contribute to the school learning environment
- Model leadership and positive behaviour to other students

## **5. ATTENDANCE AND STUDENT ENGAGEMENT**

Regular school attendance enables students to actively participate in their learning. It is essential that children develop regular attendance habits at an early age. Students who are regularly absent from school are at risk of missing out on fundamental aspects of their educational and social development. Students who are late regularly are also missing important elements of their education and disrupting class time for all the other students. It is vital that families ensure regular, on time student attendance.

The *Education and Training Reform Act 2006* sets out basic legal requirements for attendance. In Victoria, young people between six and 16 years of age (inclusive) must be enrolled in a registered school or registered for home schooling in accordance with the Act and the *Education and Training Reform Regulations 2007* and attend school every day.

Student attendance at school is a legal obligation of parents/guardians, consistent with the *Education and Training Reform Act 2006*. Victorian government schools, in partnership with parents/guardians, students and the wider community, must provide active support for full student attendance and aims for retention until the completion of Year 12 or its equivalent.

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Monitoring student attendance with the following practices & procedures:

- CASES21 is the program used for recording attendance from which a variety of attendance reports can be obtained
- Rolls are marked twice a day by all teachers
- The school's Primary Welfare Officer monitors daily absences. The Primary Welfare Officer follows up unexplained absences with parents and guardians. If absences continue, the Primary Welfare Officer will inform the Principal and families will be contacted.
- The Primary Welfare Officer monitors student late arrivals. After 5 days of late arrivals during any one term, families receive a letter from the school. After 10 days of late arrivals families are requested to meet with the Principal to discuss related issues.
- Student attendance will be reported on student mid-year and end of year reports.
- Families are required to inform the office in advance if they are planning extended holidays and complete appropriate forms.

Students participating in educational programs or representing the school at events outside school will be recorded as present when taking part in these programs. Examples of offsite programs include Sports days, Camps and Excursions.

### **Maintaining Student Attendance**

Student attendance is vital to maximizing student learning.

***The school will*** promote and maintain high levels of student attendance and participation through:

- Articulating high expectations to all members of the school community
- Adopting consistent, rigorous procedures to monitor and record student absences
- Following up student absences promptly and consistently
- Implementing data-driven attendance improvement strategies
- Creating safe, supportive learning environments where all students experience success through active participation and engagement in purposeful learning
- Providing early identification of, and supportive intervention for, students at risk of non-attendance
- Links with external agencies to provide individual support
- Providing a staged response to persistent absences or late arrivals.

***Families will*** promote and maintain high levels of student participation by:

- Ensuring that students attend school each school day
- Ensuring that students are on time for school each day
- Promoting regular attendance as being important and valued
- Notifying the school when students are absent as soon as possible
- Notifying the school when students will have extended periods of absence
- Ensuring contact details are correct and up to date

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### **6. CURRICULUM AND STUDENT ENGAGEMENT**

Avondale Primary School is committed to providing an engaging curriculum that responds to diverse student needs. Working in professional learning teams teachers focus on the following key questions:

1. What do we want our students to learn?
2. How do we know each student has learnt it?
3. How do we respond when students do not learn it?
4. How can we extend the learning of those students who have demonstrated understanding?

#### ***Professional Learning Teams***

*Teachers continually:*

- Maintain a learning environment that is stimulating and challenging for all students
- Plan a 21st Century curriculum that is responsive to the diverse learning needs of all students
- Reflect on their teaching practice and work to continuously improve their approach by accessing high quality professional development and sharing good practice
- Assess and monitor student progress so that they know every students level of achievement and plan for the next level of learning

*Students* will have the opportunity to:

- Experience a progressive and sequentially planned curriculum that is based on the Victorian Curriculum
- Learn effectively because their learning needs have been recognised and instruction is differentiated
- Understand the purpose of assessment and use assessment feedback to set new learning goals and take more responsibility for their learning
- Be more engaged through their own student voice

#### **Student Voice**

The school promotes active student participation as a means to improve student outcomes. Student participation ranges from students sharing their opinions of problems and potential solutions through junior council, to students providing feedback associated with school strategic planning. It also includes our students sharing their 'voice' in class by collaborating with teachers to improve educational outcomes.

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Students are encouraged to share their voice through:

- School Leadership positions such as school and house captains
- Representing their classes on junior school council
- Taking weekly Friday Assembly that reinforces our school values
- Organizing events within the school
- Class discussions and student feedback
- Participation in their own self-evaluation both formally and informally
- Personal goal setting

**Students** have the responsibility to:

- Actively participate and engage in the school curriculum
- Respect other members of the school community
- Not disrupt the learning of others
- Support each other's learning
- Contribute to the school environment
- Model positive behaviour to other students

**Families** support student engagement by:

- Ensuring daily, on time attendance
- Taking an interest in and monitoring their child's learning
- Developing a respectful and supportive relationship with their child's teacher
- Modelling a positive and purposeful attitude towards learning

## **7. STUDENT WELFARE AND STUDENT ENGAGEMENT**

Parents and carers are provided with the opportunity to participate in school life, formally through school council and subcommittees or informally by volunteering as a parent helper, working in the canteen, participating in the gardening club. Parents and carers can stay up to date with school news via our newsletter or website.

The school supports families to engage in their child's learning and build their capacity as active learners. It provides an environment that welcomes all parents/carers and is responsive to them as partners in learning. The school ensures that the unique experiences and skills of our students' families enrich the learning environment and the school community.

The school seeks to create successful partnerships with parents/carers and families by:

- Ensuring all parents/carers are aware of the school's Student Engagement Policy
- Conducting effective school-to-home communication, through newsletters, letters/notes and the school website
- Providing volunteer opportunities to enable parents/carers to participate in school related activities
- Involving families with homework and other curriculum-related activities

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- Involving families as participants in school decision-making through surveys
- Coordinating resources and services from the community for families, students and the school

### **External School Support**

On occasions some students and families are challenged by a range of welfare issues that impact on a student's ability to participate fully within the curriculum.

The school uses a coordinated approach to formulate early intervention and prevention strategies to identify and respond to individual students who require additional assistance or support.

The school welfare coordinator utilises external support services in order to identify and address the barriers to learning that an individual student may be facing.

### **Student and Family Support Services:**

- Psychologists
- Department of Human Services (DHS) case managers and support workers
- Social workers
- Royal Children's Hospital
- Speech Pathologists
- Physiotherapists
- Occupational Therapists
- DET support staff
- C.A.S.A. [Centre Against Sexual Assault]
- School Focused Youth Service (SFYS)
- Travencore
- Western English Language School (WELS)

DET and Avondale Primary School believe it is important for all students to have access to a quality education. To improve educational outcomes for students with welfare issues, the following key strategies are in place:

- Providing parents/carers with an Individual Learning Improvement Plan that best suits their child's needs
- Involving students and parents in programming and planning decisions
- Supporting students to access programs
- Ensuring the expertise of teachers working in our school is maintained and developed

Data is collected regarding frequency and types of welfare issues, to measure the effectiveness of school-based strategies and approaches.

### **Risk Factors that may affect student welfare and engagement include:**

- school attendance below 95%
- low levels of literacy and / or numeracy
- poor school behaviour
- family background
- refugee or English as an Additional Language (EAL) status
- a physical disability
- a learning disorder

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- presence of a risk alert
- experience of significant health issues
- drug abuse in the family environment