Gembrook Primary School

Student Engagement & Well-Being Policy

Produced in consultation with the school community

February 2016

Value: RESPECT

Vision: To provide every student with every opportunity to be the best they can be.

Mission Statement: A view to the future: Gembrook Primary School is a welcoming and respectful community that provides modern, flexible learning spaces that support a personalised, engaging and challenging learning program so that students will achieve the social, emotional, academic and physical growth to succeed in a global society.

For annual review Last Ratified 2016
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1. School profile

Gembrook Primary School is located in the semi-rural township of Gembrook on the eastern side of the Dandenong Ranges. It is approximately 60kms from Melbourne. The current enrolment for the school is approximately 170 students.

The socio-economic profile was listed as medium high in the recent performance summary. There are few Language Background Other Than English (LBOTE) students or Koorie students at the school. There are five students presently on the Program for Students with Disabilities. The school has eight grades in three learning centres. A comprehensive classroom and specialist program provides a rich learning program for the students. A range of intervention and extension programs is provided to the students.

The school has a heritage building and this is the school library. The three main learning centres have built in recent years and provide flexible learning areas. Learning spaces incorporate technology, including interactive whiteboards, iPads and laptops. The school is a 5 star sustainable school with buildings featuring energy efficient technology for lighting, heating and cooling. Rain water is harvested in water tanks. The large school grounds include open grassy areas and playgrounds with a range of play equipment. There is also a vegetable garden and small orchard.

Gembrook Primary School continues to improve the learning program in order to achieve the best possible student achievement data results.

The school has developed and implemented a whole school approach to planning, teaching and assessment across all areas of the curriculum.

The school focuses on developing the capacity of staff through targeted professional learning and reflective practises. The school will continue to strengthen the whole school developmental approach to the teaching and learning of literacy, numeracy and science.

The school encourages community involvement by providing multiple opportunities for parents/carers and members of the broader community to play an active role in many areas of the school. The school supports families to engage in their child’s learning and to build their capacity as active and engaged learners. Parents/carers and other community members are invited to participate in many aspects of school life.

The school has a strong student welfare program that recognizes the impact of student engagement and school connectedness on effective student learning. Student engagement is defined as:

- Behavioural engagement – a student’s participation in education, including academic, social and extracurricular activities at the school.
- Emotional engagement – a student’s emotional reactions in the classroom and in the school, a sense of belonging and connectedness.
2. Whole school prevention statement

The Gembrook Primary School is committed to providing a safe, secure and stimulating environment for all students. Students can reach their full potential only when they are happy, healthy and safe and when there is a positive school culture to engage and support them in their learning. Our school acknowledges that student wellbeing and student learning outcomes are inextricably linked.

The community recognises that each teacher is a source of support and a determinant in the success of their students. The teachers at this school will work collectively to ensure that students feel valued and cared for, have meaningful opportunities to contribute to the school and can effectively engage with their learning. This school recognises the need to be engaging and inclusive, recognising and responding to the diverse needs of our students, accommodating different learning profiles and rates of learning and intervening early to identify and respond to individual needs.

Gembrook Primary School strives to be a learning community where students and teachers can relate well to each other, and where different ideas and viewpoints are respected. Gembrook Primary School will:

- Provide a safe, inclusive and supportive environment that promotes health, wellbeing, learning and development.
- Build caring and supportive relationships with students
- Ensure student consultation and voice informs the development of the policies and activities that contribute to health and wellbeing
- Protect and promote the health and wellbeing of students
- Ensuring staff act with integrity when dealing with students in their care
- Build partnerships with families, health and wellbeing services and other relevant community services.

Student Wellbeing is supported by a range of personal including principal, teachers, education support staff and a chaplain. The school is support by the Department of Education and Training appointed Psychologists, Social Workers and Speech Therapists.

The Principles of Health and Wellbeing are used as a guide to develop school activities that promote, nurture and support students and are inclusive and accessible to the students and the wider community. We are committed to building the emotional intelligence and social capacity of students through the implementation of a whole school approach.

Principle 1 – Maximise access and inclusion
Quality universal services for all, with extra effort directed to ensuring education and health and wellbeing services are accessible to, and inclusive of, the most vulnerable and disadvantaged.

Principle 2 – Focus on outcomes
Health, learning, development and wellbeing outcomes are the focus when designing, delivering, evaluating and improving education and health and wellbeing services.

Principle 3 – Evidence-informed and reflective practice
Current and relevant evidence known to be effective in improving outcomes informs policy making and professional practice. Research and evaluation is undertaken to generate evidence and enable effective and reflective practice.

Principle 4 – Holistic approach
Collaboration between services and multidisciplinary professional practice is pursued to meet the needs of children, young people and families and their health, wellbeing and learning goals.

Principle 5 – Person-centred and family sensitive practice
People are seen in the context of their families and environment and are supported and empowered to lead and sustain healthy lives.

Principle 6 – Partnerships with families and communities
Partnerships are forged with children, young people, families and communities, who are seen as partners in the creation of healthy environments and good health and wellbeing.

Principle 7 – Cultural competence
Effort is made to understand and effectively communicate with people across cultures and to recognise one’s own world view. Cultural connection is recognised as playing an integral part in healthy development and wellbeing.

Principle 8 – Commitment to excellence
High expectations are held for every child and young person. Professionals continually assess their own work practices to find opportunities for improvement.

Gembrook Primary School is committed to building the emotional intelligence and social capacity of students through a variety of programs.

At Gembrook Primary School our core value is:
Respect

- By showing respect for others including adults and fellow students, we treat them the way we would like to be treated.
- By showing respect for ourselves as learners we will do our best and be successful learners.
- By showing respect for our environment we will create an organised and well maintained learning space.

The school value of Respect encompasses the Australian Government’s nine values, for Australian schools, which are:

- **Care and Compassion**
  Care for self and others

- **Integrity**
  Act in accordance with principles of moral and ethical conduct, ensure consistency between words and deeds

- **Doing Your Best**
  Seek to accomplish something worthy and admirable, try hard, pursue excellence

- **Respect**
  Treat others with consideration and regard, respect another person’s point of view

- **Fair Go**
  Pursue and protect the common good where all people are treated fairly for a just society

- **Responsibility**
  Be accountable for one’s own actions, resolve differences in constructive, non-violent and peaceful ways, contribute to society and to civic life, take care of the environment

- **Freedom**
  Enjoy all the rights and privileges of Australian citizenship free from unnecessary interference or control, and stand up for the rights of others

- **Understanding, Tolerance and Inclusion**
  Be aware of others and their cultures, accept diversity within a democratic society, being included and including others

- **Honesty and Trustworthiness**
  Be honest, sincere and seek the truth

Gembrook Primary School will encourage the understanding of respect by focusing on and teaching:

- The ‘You Can Do It! Program’ – This program helps young people achieve to the best of their ability and experience positive social-emotional well being. It teaches the skills of:
  - Getting Along
  - Organisation
  - Persistence
  - Confidence.

- Circle Time activities that foster respectful problem solving.

- Cross-Age and whole school activities.

- Sustainability programs that encourage respect for the environment

- Decision making and tolerance through leadership programs i.e. S.R.C. Grade 6 leadership program, SRC and Eco-Warriors teams.

Engagement and Wellbeing goals and targets will be part of the school’s Annual Implementation Plan.

3. **Rights and responsibilities**

At Gembrook Primary School, student well-being is at all times the shared responsibility of staff, students and parents. It is the right of all members of the school community to experience a
safe, pleasant and supportive learning and teaching environment. Staff, students and parents/carers have a right to be treated with respect and enjoy an environment free from bullying including cyber bullying, harassment, violence, discrimination or intimidation.

- **A right** is something that belongs to you and cannot be taken away by anyone. All students, teachers and parents have rights.
- **A responsibility** is something that you should do without being told. Some of these things you do for others and some you do for yourself.

Teachers have the right to be informed, within Privacy requirements, about matters relating to students that may impact on their teaching and student learning.

Students have the responsibility to contribute positively to the educational experience for themselves and other students, to participate fully in the school's educational program and to ensure that their behaviours demonstrate respect for themselves, their peers, their teachers and all other members of the school community.

Parents/Carers have a responsibility to take an active interest in their child's educational progress, model and reinforce positive behaviours and ensure their child's regular attendance. They have a responsibility to support the school in maintaining a safe and respectful learning environment for all students, and engage in regular and constructive communication with school staff regarding their child's learning.

Teachers have a responsibility to demonstrate the standards set by the Victorian Institute of Teaching. That is, to know how students learn and how to teach them effectively, know the content they teach, know their students, plan and assess for effective learning, create and maintain safe and challenging learning environments, and use a range of strategies to engage students in effective learning. Teachers also have a responsibility to fairly and consistently implement the Student Engagement and Wellbeing Policy.

Gembrook Primary School's high quality Student Engagement Policy reflects the school community's aspirations and the unique local context of the school. The policy is critical to developing a positive school culture and supporting the school council's strategic aims.

The Student Engagement policy supports Gembrook Primary School to address the legal obligations under relevant legislation including:

- **The Equal Opportunity Act 2010 (Vic)** which prohibits discrimination on the basis of protected attributes (characteristics) including race, religion, disability, sex, age, gender identity and sexual orientation.
- **The Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 (Vic)**, which requires public authorities, including government schools and their employees, to act compatibly with human rights and to consider human rights when making decisions and delivering services. Charter decisions in schools include decisions around enrolment, attendance, responding to behaviour concerns (including preventing the escalation of behaviours), the making of adjustments for students with disabilities, preventing and responding to bullying, use of restrictive practices including restraint, and decisions to suspend or expel a student. Rights protected by the Charter include the protection of families and children (including promoting the best interests of the child), the right to equality, and cultural and religious rights.
- **The Disability Standards for Education 2005**, which clarify and make more explicit the obligations on schools and the rights of students under the **Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth)**. The standards cover enrolment, participation, curriculum development, student support services, and harassment and victimisation.
- **The Education and Training Reform Act 2006 (Vic)**, which states that all Victorians, irrespective of the education and training institution they attend, where they live or their social or economic status, should have access to a high quality education that:
  (i) realises their learning potential and maximises their education and training achievement;
  (ii) promotes enthusiasm for lifelong learning;
  (iii) allows parents to take an active part in their child's education and training.

### 4. Shared expectations
Effective schools share high expectations for the whole school community. Shared expectations are:

- Jointly negotiated, owned and implemented by all members of the school community, including students.
- Clear and specific.
- Focused on positive and pro-social behaviours.
- Focused on prevention and early intervention.
- Supported by relevant procedures.
- Consistent, fair and reasonable.
- Linked to appropriate actions and consequences
5. 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
- Classroom management ladder
- Awards at school assemblies
- Contact parents regarding student extended absences
- Promoting school attendance through parent attendance

Inappropriate behaviours, including irregular attendance, will be responded to through a staged response, including:

- Understanding the student’s background and needs
- Ensuring a clear understanding of expectations by students, parents and teachers
- Providing consistent school and classroom environments
- Scaffolding the student’s learning program.
- Restorative practices – see below
- Following the agreed School Student Management flow chart
- Use of the classroom ladder for classroom management

Broader support strategies will include:

- Involving and supporting the parents/carers,
- Involving the teacher, developing and managing individual pathways.
- Specialist sessions and intervention which may include councillors, speech therapists, occupational therapists, guidance officers, chaplain.
- Convening student support group meetings – the student support group is an important component of the staged response for students facing difficulty with engagement, attendance or behaviour
- Developing individualised flexible learning, behaviour or attendance plans
- Providing broader educational programs, for example experiential learning, camps/outdoor education/creative arts
- Involving community support agencies.

Restorative Practices

The school is committed to the use of restorative practices with students. Restorative Practices:

- Are underpinned by student learning and facilitate an environment of safety, trust and connectedness
- Promote awareness of others, responsibility and empathy
- Involve direct and voluntary participation of those affected by misconduct in its resolution
- Promote relationship management rather than behaviour management Separate the deed from the doer
- Are systematic, not situational
- Are concerned with establishing or re-establishing social equality in relationships; that is, relationships in which each person’s rights to equal dignity, concern and respect are satisfied

In accordance with VRQA Guidelines Gembrook Primary school does not use Corporal punishment.
6. 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.

Discipline procedures – suspension and expulsion

When considering suspension or expulsion, schools are required to follow the procedures of Ministerial Order No. 625 – Procedures for Suspension and Expulsion March 2014


Further advice is available on the Department of Education and Training website:


Corporal punishment is not used at Gembrook Primary School.

Evaluation

This policy will be reviewed annually or more often if necessary due to changes in regulations or circumstances.
At all times Restorative Practices will be the preferred strategy used to resolve issues.

Unacceptable Behaviours
Disruptive, swearing, physically hurting/touching, threatening behaviour

Acceptable Behaviours
Respectful and inclusive behaviours, using the YCDI keys, following school and classroom expectations.

Serious Incidents
Theft, physical and/or verbal abuse to a member of the school community, refusal to follow a teacher's instructions.

Unacceptable Behaviours Step 1
Classroom:
- Warning
- Students go down the ladder.
- Revisit expectations
- Agree on future behaviour

Yard:
- Restorative chat
- Inform classroom teacher if necessary

Consequences Step 2
If students fall off the bottom of the ladder they are removed and sent to another classroom.

Student does not participate in Fabulous Friday for that week.

Re-entry to classroom via a Restorative Chat including all people involved and an agreement on future behaviour. A reflection sheet may be used to prompt discussion.

Rewards
Students climb up the ladder and are rewarded using classroom teacher's system.

Other rewards may include:
- Students sent to principal.
- Students receive YCDI ticket in classroom or playground.
- Phone call home.
- Postcard home.
- Personal comment to parent at school

Consequences Step 3
If student falls off the ladder for a second time or there is a serious incident, student is withdrawn from class for the remainder of the day. (Principal's Office)
Parents are informed.
Re-entry meeting via Restorative Discussion with the principal, or representative, the next day, to include all the people involved and a recorded agreement on further consequences and future behaviour.
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