



# 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.

Loch Primary 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.

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1. School profile
2. School values, philosophy and vision
3. Engagement strategies
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## POLICY

### 1. SCHOOL PROFILE

Loch Primary School is a small, rural school set in the beautiful rolling hills of South Gippsland with an average enrolment of 130 students. The school has 7 equivalent full-time staff: 1 Principal Class, 9 Teachers and 5 Educational Support Staff and 2 Admin staff. Our overall socio – economic profile based on the school's Student Family occupation and education index is in the low-medium range.

Loch Primary School is considered highly within the community, experiencing significant growth over the past three years. Our school has a deep commitment to:

- fostering knowledgeable, respectful and caring young people who contribute positively and responsibly to their local and global community.
- be recognised as a high performing school with a reputation of evidence based best practice that is visible in each classroom.

Our school is well regarded for its focus on evidence based approaches to teaching and learning. It is well known for its explicit, systematic approach to teaching fundamental concepts and skills to allow students to have the best foundation to extend complex thought and learning in the later years.

The school motto "Dream Achieve Succeed: Every child known, safe, inspired, challenged and empowered", is reinforced with the values of Be Respectful, Be Responsible, Be Resilient, Be Creative, Be Curious, Be Your Best. We are a 'Play is the Way' school and this behaviour education philosophy underpins our social and emotional learning. Loch Primary School is a partner school for the Respectful Relationships initiative and students engage in this curriculum through weekly lessons, class meetings and by a whole school approach.

Loch Primary School is proud of its reputation and proven history in catering for the diverse needs within the community. We currently have six students involved in the Program for Students with Disabilities. These students are supported by Education Support Staff who assist them in class, specialist lessons and outside in the playground. In addition to students on the PSD, our school has a high percentage of students who have additional needs and are identified with learning disabilities such as dyslexia, dysgraphia, dyscalculia, language delay, autism and ADHD. Our teaching team is skilled in; developing individual learning programs to meet the diverse needs of our students, creating safe and welcoming learning environments and providing a range of opportunities for student growth in emotional and social capabilities.

At Loch Primary School we place great importance on students developing high level literacy and numeracy skills. Teachers utilise explicit instruction teaching methods and implement a (MSL) Multisensory Structured Language approach to teaching English and Mathematics. All teachers implement the Big Five of Reading with a focus on Systematic Synthetic Phonics and follow the science of reading instruction.

The well resourced specialist programs of Digital Technology, Physical Education, Visual Art, Performing Arts and Music are provided for all students each week and these specialist teachers provide a range of opportunities for students to use their new skills in different contexts. All of our students participate in an annual Arts Showcase and Celebration Evening.

All students participate in our camping program and enjoy experiences of camping under canvas, a three day urban visit, adventure camps and an overnight beach camp. Students enjoy success in swimming, athletics, cross country and interschool sports. Students are encouraged to participate in individual and team sports and to learn that success comes from determination, persistence and doing your best.

Our school has a long tradition of successfully preparing students for secondary school and future employment. This includes the development of excellent leadership skills through Co-operative Learning Groups, Peer Mediation training and student leadership roles and opportunities.

Loch Primary School provides a safe and supportive community of life long learning where respect, diversity and pride are valued by all. The school has links with extended community through the Lions Club, Masonic Lodge, Koringal Women's Association and CWA.

We encourage parental involvement in the school and we believe that an effective school community is built on strong and productive relationships with families. Strong parent involvement on School Council and an active parent body contributes to the success of Loch Primary School.

Loch Primary School is very proud of its achievements in building a strong foundation for our positive school culture. It is based on a belief that all students have the right to be provided a safe and secure learning environment which provides meaningful opportunities to meet their personal and educational potential. A key component of the school's approach to prevention is teaching positive behaviours and developing personal and social capabilities of students with logical consequences to address appropriate and inappropriate behaviour. The school also uses the Play is the Way methodology which provides all members of the community a clear, shared understanding of the need to develop social and emotional skills using wisdom and intrinsic rewards, not force.

This process is strongly supported through the provision of a number of supporting programs including Play is the Way 3R's process, Student Peer Mediator, Student Leadership positions and other targeted Social Skills Programs.

The Welfare Team comprising of the Principal, Classroom teachers (as needed) and the DET Psychologist meet twice per term or as the need arises to discuss students who may be at risk and what future direction we need to take to support the child. At Loch Primary School the Principal is the Wellbeing Leader.

Our positive school culture has a solid foundation in the belief that student engagement is the basis for learning. To support this, the school team is actively engaged in developing classroom practices to ensure that our pedagogy and curriculum engages all students by recognising and responding to their diverse learning needs. Effective teaching, inclusive and engaging curriculum and respectful relationships between staff and students is promoted through Play is the Way and through class and level meetings that encourage the social and emotional development of students in line with the Victorian Curriculum.

The school also supports the school community through building relationships with outside agencies to support individual student and family needs.

## **2. SCHOOL VALUES, PHILOSOPHY AND VISION**

Loch Primary School is committed to providing a safe, supportive and inclusive environment for all students, staff and members of our community. Our school recognises the importance of the partnership between our school and parents and carers to support student learning, engagement and wellbeing. We share a commitment to, and a responsibility for, creating an inclusive, safe and orderly school environment for our students.

Our Statement of Values Policy acknowledges that parents and school staff are strongly motivated to do their best for every child. Everyone has the right to differing opinions and views and to raise concerns, as long as we do this respectfully as a community working together.

The programs and teaching at Loch Primary School support and promote the principles and practice of Australian democracy, including a commitment to:

- elected government
- the rule of law
- equal rights for all before the law
- freedom of religion
- freedom of speech and association

- the values of openness and tolerance.

Our values are underpinned by evidenced based research demonstrating that teaching social and emotional literacy and ensuring that students feeling a connectedness to school works. At Loch Primary School, positive student engagement and wellbeing is a high priority. Parents and teachers recognise that this element in a student's academic, personal and social curriculum is essential for continual improvement and development. Loch Primary School aims to develop aspirant students who find purpose and value in their education.

To celebrate and embed our Statement of Values and Philosophy in our school community, we

- display posters and banners that promote our values in our school
- celebrate our values in our school newsletter
- provide awards and recognition for students who actively demonstrate the values
- discuss our values with students in the classroom, meetings and assemblies.

Our vision is to develop young people with active and creative minds, a sense of understanding and compassion for others and the courage to act on their beliefs. We create a challenging learning environment which develops students who are resilient, adaptable, equipped with skills, knowledge and dispositions to be life-long learners who become personally fulfilled and socially responsible members of their communities.

Our staff inspire, engage and nurture our students through a dynamic curriculum that supports the academic, social and emotional wellbeing of each child. Our parents are active partners in creating a thriving learning community.

At Loch Primary School we are providing an environment which enables students to

***“Dream, Achieve Succeed”.***

***Every child known, safe, inspired, challenged and empowered.***

We aim to promote an environment that focuses on achievement by empowering and engaging students to become capable, confident and independent lifelong learners.

We also believe students need to be taught well. Loch Primary School is well known for its evidence based teaching approaches which ensures early and sustained success at school resulting in increased ability and self-esteem for future learning in Secondary School and beyond. The school provides adequate training to all its staff, resulting in a safe, positive and orderly environment where all students are expected to learn and achieve their potential.

Our view of the future at Loch Primary School includes:

- an environment where confident students take responsibility for their learning
- a challenging and comprehensive curriculum that stimulates all students to do their best.
- celebrating successes and valuing effort and endeavour as students pursue excellence.
- a highly skilled staff who are motivated and enthusiastic about learning and teaching.
- respect for a teacher's right to teach and a student's right to learn.
- an environment where respect for others and unity between all members of the school community is highly valued.
- members of our school community treat each other with consideration and regard and are inclusive towards all.

- a caring and supportive environment which promotes honesty and where children feel safe and secure.
- positive relationships are valued and developed within our community.

The whole school approach of Loch Primary School addresses state and regional priorities to achieve learning for life, happy, healthy and resilient kids, breaking the link between disadvantage and outcomes for students, making sure there is pride and confidence in our schools. The approach also aims to improve learning outcomes in the areas of literacy and numeracy and increase student attendance.

The Student Engagement and Wellbeing Policy should be considered alongside our School's Statement of Values, Child Safe Standards and Equal Opportunity and Sexual Harassment Policies. This Policy also reinforces the school's commitment to the Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities 2006 and the basic principles of freedom, respect, equality and dignity.

### **3. ENGAGEMENT STRATEGIES**

*Loch Primary School has developed a range of strategies to promote engagement, positive behaviour and respectful relationships for all students in our school. 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.*

#### **Whole of School Strategies**

- *high and consistent expectations of all staff, students and parents and carers*
- *prioritise 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*
- *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 Loch Primary School use an Explicit Direct Instruction 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 Loch Primary School adopt a broad range of teaching and assessment approaches to effectively respond to the diverse learning needs of our students and follow the standards set by the Victorian Institute of Teaching*
- *our school's Statement of Values 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 to support students moving into different stages of their schooling*
- *positive behaviour and student achievement is acknowledged in the classroom, and formally in school assemblies and communication to parents*
- *monitor 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 Student Representative Council and other forums including year group meetings and Peer Support Groups. Students are also encouraged to speak with their teachers and Principal whenever they have any questions or concerns.*
- *create opportunities for cross—age connections amongst students through special events, sporting events, music programs and peer support programs*
- *All students are welcome to self-refer to the School Chaplain 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*
  - *Play is the way*
  - *In house 'Gorgeous Kids' programs*
  - *Lunchtime activities*
- *program, incursions and excursions developed to address issue specific behaviour (i.e. anger management programs)*
- *opportunities for student inclusion (i.e. sports teams, clubs, recess and lunchtime activities)*
- *buddy programs, peers support programs*

### **Targeted School Strategies**

- each class has a classroom teacher and team Leader responsible for their year level, who monitor the health and wellbeing of students in their cohort, and act as a point of contact for students who may need additional support
- connect all Koorie students with a Koorie Engagement Support Officer and have an ILP
- all students in Out of Home Care will be appointed a Learning Mentor, have an Individual Learning Plan and will be referred to Student Support Services for an Educational Needs Assessment
- all teachers 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

### **Individual School Strategies**

Loch Primary School 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 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 Child First

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
- running regular Student Support Group meetings for all students:
  - with a disability
  - in Out of Home Care
  - and with other complex needs that require ongoing support and monitoring

#### - **Attendance**

Loch understands that full attendance is a key to engagement and maximises every student's ability to learn and our teachers' ability to teach effectively. Loch Primary School closely monitors student attendance with effective and regular follow-up to parents via the online platform Compass. Daily phone calls via the admin staff are used to contact families with absent children. Classroom teachers and Principal work with families who are at risk of disengagement to improve attendance and engagement in school.

#### **Respectful Relationships**

In 2018 Loch Primary School became a Respectful Relationships school. Combined with the Play is the Way framework, Respectful Relationships curriculum is explicitly taught during weekly lessons and underpins learning and interactions throughout the school between students, teachers and parents and the community. The aim of the Respectful Relationships initiative is to embed a culture of respect and equality across the entire school community. This approach leads to positive impacts on students' academic outcomes their mental health classroom behaviour and relationships between teachers and students. The best relationships are respectful ones and we know that schools play an important role in creating real and lasting change to achieve gender equality and prevent family violence.

#### - **Play is the Way & 3 R's Restorative Practices**

Loch Primary School uses Restorative Practices through the Play is the Way model to encourage engagement, and build pride, respect and responsibility in each individual student. This practice is also used in the classroom and out in the yard and is the basis for respectful communication, relationships and how to respond to behavioural issues. This is promoted through the following Play is the Way Life Rafts and Virtues:

Life Rafts:

- Treat others as you would like them to treat you.
- Be brave – participate to progress.

- Have reasons for the things you say and do.
- It takes great strength to be sensible.
- Pursue your personal best no matter who you work with.
- Be the master, not the victim of your feelings.

#### Virtues:

- Good Manners
- Courage
- Persistence/Resilience
- Friendliness
- Tolerance/Acceptance
- Compassion

#### Supporting positive behaviour and relationships

Loch Primary School requires the active involvement of parents in the learning and behaviour of each student. It seeks to foster this cooperative approach with parents through an open door policy, reports, student-led conferences, parent-teacher interviews as required, phone calls, meetings, portfolios, use of diaries/communication books, Compass, email and school website.

Loch Primary School recognises the importance of the partnership between schools and parents to support student learning, engagement and wellbeing. We share a commitment to, and a responsibility for, ensuring inclusive, safe and orderly environments for children and young people.

The Statement of Values sets out our behavioural expectations of all members in this school community, including the Principal, all school staff, parents, students and visitors. It respects the diversity of individuals in our school community and addresses the shared responsibilities of all members in building safe and respectful school communities. Discrimination, sexual and other forms of harassment, bullying, violence, aggression and threatening behaviour are unacceptable, and will not be tolerated in this school.

The Statement of Values acknowledges that parents and school staff are strongly motivated to do their best for every child. Everyone has the right to differing opinions and views and to raise concerns, as long as we do this respectfully as a community working together.

In encouraging and building this cooperative approach it is acknowledged there will be behaviours and events that occur that compromise this ideal. When this occurs Loch will use a restorative approach using the adapted Play is the Way 3R's process to repair damaged relationships with individuals and groups. Where appropriate the school will inform and involve parents in these processes.

#### A Staged Response

- This approach will be conducted in an informal way for minor incidents and be embedded in classroom teaching and learning.
- Minor incidents will require a restorative session with the classroom teacher using the Loch Primary School 3Rs Guide Sheet.
- Serious incidents will require a more formal restorative session that involves the Principal and/or Senior Teacher; all persons affected in the incident; and documentation.
- There will be situations where a formal conference involving the said people, parents, support persons and convener will be required. Any imposed consequence will be

imbedded in the restorative process that requires a response 'earning back respect and trust' in relation to those who have been affected.

- Where a restorative approach has previously been conducted and subsequently the behaviour continues, the school will constitute a Student Support Group to devise strategies and approaches to address the behaviour, this may include intervention from specialist services and external agencies in the local community.

Restorative practices are intended to move the focus away from a punitive consequence that is based on the establishment of wrong doing. Rather it seeks to value and support those involved so that they feel empowered to take positive action to address the situation and move forward. Restorative practice 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.

#### - **Transitions**

Student Pathways focuses on transitions from Pre-School to Foundation; Year 2-3; and Year 6 to Secondary College. Current practices are investigated and recommendations for improvement of transitions at every year level of the school.

#### - **Professional Learning**

Teacher Professional Learning is given high priority at Loch to ensure the strategies and approaches adopted are implemented with integrity. We have continued to embed the FISO improvement cycle and the explicit instruction model along with the gradual release of responsibility. During the past three years there has been a whole school focus on developing a whole school curriculum with a consistent focus across the whole school. English and Maths have also been a major focus with all staff members engaging in professional learning to improve their practice.

## **4. IDENTIFYING STUDENTS IN NEED OF SUPPORT**

*Loch Primary School is committed to providing the necessary support to ensure our students are supported intellectually, emotionally and socially. The teaching team plays a significant role in developing and implementing strategies to help identify students in need of support and enhance student wellbeing. Loch Primary School 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 parents or peers*

## 5. RIGHTS & RESPONSIBILITIES

All members of the 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 responsibility of members of our community.

The Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act (2006) outline a vision of human rights for all Victorians. The charter affirms that all people are born free and equal in dignity and rights. While the charter demands equality for all, it also emphasises the value of difference. The charter requires public authorities, including government schools and their employees to act compatibly with human rights and to consider them when making decisions and delivering services.

Students are better prepared for learning when they are healthy, safe and happy. We aim to have a safe, supportive and stimulating school environment where:

- Everyone has the right to feel safe
- Everyone has the right to learn
- Teachers have the right to teach
- Parents, the school and broader community work together to enhance student wellbeing

### **Student Rights and Responsibilities**

- To be provided with the opportunities to reach their full potential
- To work in a healthy, safe and non-discriminatory environment
- To be valued and treated with respect regardless of sexual orientation, religious beliefs and physical appearance
- To learn in a supportive and stimulating environment, free from harassment, this includes bullying, (including cyber bullying) racial and religious vilification
- To have specific needs addressed
- To be responsible learners and assist in the creation of a safe learning environment
- To be positive and enthusiastic members of the school community
- To follow class and school rules
- To respect own and school property
- To respect and value the opinions of others
- To treat all members of the school community with respect
- To set realistic goals which are attainable and challenging, to promote personal growth

### **Staff Rights and Responsibilities**

- To build positive relationships with students as the basis for engagement and learning
- To be valued and treated with respect, dignity and fairness free from harassment and bullying (including cyberbullying)
- To work in a healthy, safe and non-discriminatory environment
- To work effectively in a supportive, safe and stimulating environment
- To pursue professional development
- To treat all students, staff and parents with respect, courtesy, dignity and fairness
- To teach appropriate curriculum, content and follow school and department policy and procedures
- To be positive role models at school and in the community
- To work collaboratively with colleagues and share expertise and knowledge in a variety of collaborative contexts
- To work in partnership with parents, carers and members of the wider school community and maintain a professional relationship at all times

- To behave and dress in an appropriate and professional manner
- To promote a positive image of the school in the community
- To respect privacy and confidentiality
- To treat all members of the school community with respect

### **Parent Rights and Responsibilities**

- To know that their children are in a safe and happy learning environment
- To be informed about student behaviour and consequences- both positive and negative
- To be valued and treated with respect, dignity and fairness free from harassment and bullying (including cyberbullying)
- To be active partners in the learning and development of their children
- To positively support class/school behaviour expectations
- To ensure students are punctual and attend school regularly
- To support the school's dress code
- To use appropriate grievance procedures
- To promote a positive image of the school in the community
- To respect privacy with confidentiality

### **Students with Disabilities & Impairments**

All students with a disability, should be treated with dignity and enjoy the benefits of an education in a supportive environment, which values and encourages participation by all students.

Loch Primary School has a number of students enrolled under the PSD program. All of these students have access to an engaging, age-appropriate curriculum supported by an Individual Learning Plan, regular Student Support Group meetings, passionate and caring Education Support Officers and highly skilled and understanding teachers.

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 a 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. It will usually be presented in the form of an individual learning plan (ILP) that is regularly reviewed and advised by all pa

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.

## **6. STUDENT BEHAVIOURAL EXPECTATIONS**

Behavioural expectations of students, staff and families are grounded in our school's Statement of Values and Codes of Conduct. Student Bullying behaviour will be responded to consistently with Loch Primary School's Bullying Policy.

### **Shared Expectations**

Loch Primary School has a real sense of community and each of our children is considered an individual to be valued, known and cared for by all staff. Our school is a 'learning community' based on shared expectations and values, so that all children, staff and parents work in harmony to realise our vision. The expectations are intended to be positive in that they set out what are expected and appropriate behaviours for our school community. Our shared expectations are intended to support individual students and families that come to our community from a diversity of backgrounds, communities and experiences.

### **Students will:**

- Model positive behaviour to other students.
- Comply with and model school values.
- Work to uphold our PITW Virtues and Life Rafts.
- Behave in a safe and responsible manner.
- Respect ourselves, other members of the school community and the school environment.
- Actively participate in school.
- Not disrupt the learning of others and make the most of our educational opportunities.
- Follow teacher instructions.

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

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:

- warning a student that their behaviour is inappropriate
- teacher controlled consequences such as moving a student in a classroom or other reasonable and proportionate responses to misbehaviour
- withdrawal of privileges
- restorative practices
- behaviour reviews
- referral to the Principal
- suspension

Ongoing Behaviour issues

Where students exhibit ongoing behaviour patterns; as part of a staged response a range of strategies will be used.

These may include:-

**Discussing** the behaviour problems and reaching an agreement for future behaviour. Using the Play is the Way 3Rs guide sheet to reflect and repair relationships.

**Explicit Teaching** of appropriate behaviours/social stories.

**Monitoring and providing feedback** (Student diary)

**Break time** allowing students a "Cooling Off" period by going for a walk to help with self soothing or alternatively in junior years student may take themselves to a quiet spot in the room.

**Withdrawal** a student may be withdrawn from an activity, class, camp or excursion due to inappropriate behaviour and provided with an alternative educational setting within the school.

**Counselling** for individuals in order to modify inappropriate behaviour

**Discipline/Student Support Group Meeting** involving parents/caregivers and/or relevant DEECD support staff, Outside Agencies to assist with modifying behaviour

**Suspension & Expulsion:** For serious disciplinary measures we follow DEECD Engaging Schools are Effective Schools: Student Engagement Policy Guidelines 2009 developed in response to Ministerial Order No.184

Corporal Punishment is prohibited in all Victorian schools. Corporal punishment must NOT be used at the School under any circumstances

Suspension and expulsion are measures of last resort and may only be used in particular situations consistent with Department policy, available at:

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/participation/pages/engagement.aspx>

## **Bullying and Harassment**

Loch Primary School is committed to providing a safe and respectful learning environment where bullying will not be tolerated.

Loch Primary School acknowledges that school staff owe a duty of care to students to take reasonable steps to reduce the risk of reasonably foreseeable harm, which can include harm that may be caused by bullying behaviour.

### **Definitions**

In 2018 the Education Council of the Council of Australian Governments endorsed the following definition of bullying for use by all Australian schools:

*Bullying is an ongoing and deliberate misuse of power in relationships through repeated verbal, physical and/or social behaviour that intends to cause physical, social and/or psychological harm. It can involve an individual or a group misusing their power, or perceived power, over one or more persons who feel unable to stop it from happening.*

*Bullying can happen in person or online, via various digital platforms and devices and it can be obvious (overt) or hidden (covert). Bullying behaviour is repeated, or has the potential to be repeated, over time (for example, through sharing of digital records)*

*Bullying of any form or for any reason can have immediate, medium and long-term effects on those involved, including bystanders. Single incidents and conflict or fights between equals, whether in person or online, are not defined as bullying.*

Bullying has three main features:

- It involves a misuse of power in a relationship
- It is ongoing and repeated, and
- It involves behaviours that can cause harm.

Bullying can be:

1. *direct* physical bullying – e.g. hitting, tripping, and pushing or damaging property.
2. *direct* verbal bullying – e.g. name calling, insults, homophobic or racist remarks, verbal abuse.
3. *indirect* bullying – e.g. spreading rumours, playing nasty jokes to embarrass and humiliate, mimicking, encouraging others to socially exclude a person and/or damaging a person's social reputation or social acceptance.

What Bullying is Not:

Many distressing behaviours are NOT examples of bullying even though they are unpleasant and often require teacher intervention and management. There are three socially unpleasant situations that are often confused with bullying:

- Mutual Conflict
- Social Rejection or Dislike
- Single- episode acts of nastiness or meanness or random acts of aggression or intimidation

These situations are not regarded as Bullying unless they are directed towards someone specific, and targeted repeatedly.

## Cyberbullying

Multimedia technologies have created new domains in which young people learn and interact. Technology such as mobile phones, SMS, Internet, in-phone cameras, emails, chat rooms, etc can be an effective way to learn and a great way to communicate. Unfortunately, some people use this technology to bully others by sending threatening or unwanted messages or spreading nasty rumours. This is called Cyberbullying.

At school we have excellent filters in place both through the Education Department and via our own service provider. We often discuss the correct use of computers and the network at our school. It is important that parents do the same and ensure that their children are safe when using the computer. The Federal Government has an information web site about this issue at [www.netalert.com.au](http://www.netalert.com.au).

The DET approach to "Duty of Care" is by:-

- Providing and supervising technology use. Schools should take positive and reasonable steps to protect students from risks.
- Enforcing "Acceptable Use Agreement".
- Taking responsibility to equip students with the curriculum that they will need to face a global world in the future.
- Taking responsibility to 'open' certain sites but must make all staff aware of and how the site will be used and how the students will behave on it.
- Teaching students a "Moral Compass" - To be Smart, Responsible, Ethical, Caring Kids Online.

All students and parents sign an 'Acceptable Use Agreement' at the commencement of each school year and this has consequences for inappropriate use. (This will replace the Internet Agreement Consent.)

The DEECD Privacy Law states that the "Posting and sharing of information online or in any other way, requires "consent". Consent must be fully informed; freely given; current and specific in how the information will be presented (this includes images); and who it will be presented to.

Schools require a signed authority for any work, images or information posted online.

We aim to promote 'Citizenship in the Digital World' and to do this we must focus on the **values** that underpin the use of technologies. Students need to work with their teachers and parents in order to understand **cyber safety**. This will develop students of **Digital Citizenship** which teaches them to use moral choices when using technologies; includes the development of age –appropriate 'rules of engagement'; changes technologies to 'kid-speak'; and will empower students to reflect on consequences.

The aim of Digital Citizenship is :-

- 'One integrated life' – focus for students to use technologies with a personal, community and global responsibility (ie: both at home and at school)
- Balance – understanding past, present and possible future effects.
- Safety and security – actions might lead to harm yourself and others.
- Cyberbullying – compassion, empathy and taking responsibility.
- Sexting - negative consequences of using a mobile phone to take and transmit images of a sexual nature of oneself or others.
- Copyright and plagiarism.

In dealing with negative consequences, the school and parents are encouraged **not** to focus on 'what' happened **but** 'why' it happened? This reinforces the moral, ethical, compassionate and consequences of the action.

### **Other distressing behaviours**

Many distressing behaviours may not constitute bullying even though they are unpleasant. Students who are involved in or who witness any distressing behaviours should report their concerns to school staff.

*Mutual conflict* involves an argument or disagreement between people with no imbalance of power. In incidents of mutual conflict, generally, both parties are upset and usually both want a resolution to the issue. Unresolved mutual conflict can develop into bullying if one of the parties targets the other repeatedly in retaliation.

*Social rejection or dislike* is not bullying unless it involves deliberate and repeated attempts to cause distress, exclude or create dislike by others.

*Single-episode acts* of nastiness or physical aggression are not the same as bullying. However, single episodes of nastiness or physical aggression are not acceptable behaviours at our school and may have serious consequences for students engaging in this behaviour. Loch Primary will use its Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy to guide a response to single episodes of nastiness or physical aggression.

*Harassment* is language or actions that are demeaning, offensive or intimidating to a person. It can take many forms, including sexual harassment and disability harassment. Harassment of any kind Loch Primary will not be tolerated at and may have serious consequences for students engaging in this behaviour. Loch Primary will use its Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy to guide a response to students demonstrating harassing behaviour, unless the behaviour also constitutes bullying, in which case the behaviour will be managed in accordance with this Bullying Prevention Policy.

Loch Primary School maintains a **zero tolerance policy** to the bullying and/or harassment of students and staff. As a consequence, it is the responsibility of staff, students and parents to work together in an attempt to eliminate it from the school. This will only occur if we treat the matter as a curriculum issue and take a whole school approach. We aim to teach social skills and confident behaviours to students. Parents also need to be involved in supporting school programs and when needed, to attend meetings and support disciplinary action which may result from student actions. Students, staff and parents must promote an anti bullying atmosphere in the school and an attitude that is okay to tell parents and teachers if one is being bullied or witnesses bullying. To achieve this, we are encouraging students to take an active role in eliminating bullying. Therefore, reports will not be dismissed as telling tales but will be acted upon.

Staff will supervise the yard duty areas interacting with students, looking for 'hot spots' and diffusing situations when they arise. This approach and Loch Primary School's commitment to the Restorative Practices process creates a supportive, responsive school community and reduces bullying opportunities.

### **BULLYING PREVENTION**

Loch Primary School has a number of programs and strategies in place to build a positive and inclusive school culture. We strive to foster a school culture that prevents bullying behaviour by modelling and encouraging behaviour that demonstrates acceptance, kindness and respect.

Bullying prevention at Loch Primary School is proactive and is supported by research that indicates that a whole school, multifaceted approach is the most effective way to prevent and address bullying. At our school:

- We have a positive school environment that provides safety, security and support for students and promotes positive relationships and wellbeing.
- We strive to build strong partnerships between the school, families and the broader community that means all members work together to ensure the safety of students.
- Teachers are encouraged to incorporate classroom management strategies that discourage bullying and promote positive behaviour.
- A range of year level incursions and programs are planned for each year to raise awareness about bullying and its impacts.
- In the classroom, our social and emotional learning curriculum teaches students what constitutes bullying and how to respond to bullying behaviour assertively. This promotes resilience, assertiveness, conflict resolution and problem solving. Loch Primary School utilises the "Play is the Way" approach to implement explicit teaching in these areas.
- The Peer Support Program (Bee program) encourage positive relationships between students in different year levels. We seek to empower students to be confident communicators and to resolve conflict in a non-aggressive and constructive way.
- Students are encouraged to look out for each other and to talk to teachers and older peers about any bullying they have experienced or witnessed.
- We participate in the National Day of Action Against Bullying and Violence.

## **INCIDENT RESPONSE**

### **Reporting concerns to Loch Primary School**

Bullying complaints will be taken seriously and responded to sensitively at our school.

Students who may be experiencing bullying behaviour, or students who have witnessed bullying behaviour, are encouraged to report their concerns to school staff as soon as possible.

In most circumstances, we encourage students to speak their classroom teacher. However, students are welcome to discuss their concerns with any trusted member of staff including teachers, Education Support staff, or leadership.

Parents or carers who may develop concerns that their child is involved in, or has witnessed bullying behaviour at Loch Primary School should contact the classroom teacher or school leadership.

Our ability to effectively reduce and eliminate bullying behaviour is greatly affected by students and/or parents and carers reporting concerning behaviour as soon as possible, so that the responses implemented by Loch Primary School are timely and appropriate in the circumstances.

### **Investigations**

When notified of alleged bullying behaviour, school staff are required to:

1. record the details of the allegations and
2. inform Principal, senior teachers and /or class teachers.

The Principal and teachers are responsible for investigating allegations of bullying in a timely and sensitive manner. To appropriately investigate an allegation of bullying, staff may:

- speak to the students involved in the allegations, including the victim/s, the alleged perpetrator/s and any witnesses to the incidents
- speak to the parents of the students involved
- speak to the teachers of the students involved
- take detailed notes of all discussions for future reference
- obtain written statements from all or any of the above.

All communications in the course of investigating an allegation of bullying will be managed sensitively. Investigations will be completed as quickly as possible to allow for the behaviours to be addressed in a timely manner.

The objective of completing a thorough investigation into the circumstances of alleged bullying behaviour is to determine the nature of the conduct and the students involved. A thorough understanding of the alleged bullying will inform staff about how to most effectively implement an appropriate response to that behaviour.

Serious bullying, including serious cyberbullying, is a criminal offence and may be referred to Victoria Police. For more information, see: [Brodie's Law](#).

### **Responses to bullying behaviours**

When Principal and or teachers have sufficient information to understand the circumstances of the alleged bullying and the students involved, a number of strategies may be implemented to address the behaviour and support affected students in consultation with Principal, Teachers, Department of Education and Training specialist staff.

There are a number of factors that will be considered when determining the most appropriate response to the behaviour. When making a decision about how to respond to bullying behaviour, Loch Primary School will consider:

- the age and maturity of the students involved
- the severity and frequency of the bullying, and the impact it has had on the victim student
- whether the perpetrator student or students have displayed similar behaviour before
- whether the bullying took place in a group or one-to-one context
- whether the perpetrator demonstrates insight or remorse for their behaviour
- the alleged motive of the behaviour, including any element of provocation.

The school may implement all, or some of the following responses to bullying behaviours:

- Offer counselling support to the victim student or students, including referral to the Student Support Services Officer, external provider.
- Offer counselling support to the perpetrator student or students, including referral to the Student Support Services Officer and / or external provider.
- Offer counselling support to affected students, including witnesses and/or friends of the victim student, including referral to the Student Support Services Officer and / or external provider.
- Facilitate a restorative practice meeting with all or some of the students involved. The objective of restorative practice is to repair relationships that have been damaged by bringing about a sense of remorse and restorative action on the part of the person who has bullied someone and forgiveness by the person who has been bullied.
- Facilitate a mediation between some or all of the students involved to help to encourage students to take responsibility for their behaviour and explore underlying reasons for conflict or grievance. Mediation is only suitable if all students are involved voluntarily and demonstrate a willingness to engage in the mediation process.

- Facilitate a process using the Support Group Method, involving the victim student(s), the perpetrator students and a group of students who are likely to be supportive of the victim(s).
- Implement a Method of Shared Concern process with all students involved in the bullying.
- Implement disciplinary consequences for the perpetrator students, which may include removal of privileges, detention, suspension and/or expulsion consistent with our Student Wellbeing and Engagement policy, the Ministerial Order on Suspensions and Expulsions and any other relevant Department policy.
- Facilitate a Student Support Group meeting and/or Behaviour Support Plan for affected students.
- Prepare a Safety Plan or Individual Management Plan restricting contact between victim and perpetrator students.
- Provide discussion and/or mentoring for different social and emotional learning competencies of the students involved. Monitor the behaviour of the students involved for an appropriate time and take follow up action if necessary.
- Implement year group targeted strategies to reinforce positive behaviours, for example through "Play is the Way" sessions.

The class teacher and Principal are responsible for maintaining up to date records of the investigation of and responses to bullying behaviour.

Loch Primary School understands the importance of monitoring and following up on the progress of students who have been involved in or affected by bullying behaviour. Where appropriate, school staff will also endeavour to provide parents and carers with updates on the management of bullying incidents.

## **7. ENGAGING WITH FAMILIES**

Loch Primary 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 all classrooms have an open-door policy
- 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.
- Having formal Student, Parent, Teacher conferences.

## 8. EVALUATION

Loch Primary School will collect data each year to understand the frequency and types of wellbeing and engagement 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:

- Attitudes to School Survey
- Incidents reported inside and outside classroom
- Marzano Effective Teaching Surveys
- HOTS SPOTS in the yard survey
- Student Representative Council feedback
- School reports
- Parent survey
- Staff survey
- Compass Student Management System

### FURTHER INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

- *Statement of Values and School Philosophy*
- *Child Safe Standards*

### REVIEW CYCLE

This policy was last updated in December 2019 and is scheduled for review in December 2022.