

## POLICY STATEMENT

# Student Engagement and Wellbeing

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## Introduction

### Definition

Student engagement can be defined as three interrelated components: behavioural, emotional and cognitive.

- **Behavioural engagement** refers to students' participation in education, including the academic, social and extracurricular activities of the school.
- **Emotional engagement** encompasses students' emotional reactions in the classroom and in the school and measures a students' sense of belonging or connectedness to the school.
- **Cognitive engagement** relates to a students' investment in learning and their intrinsic motivation and self-regulation.

Student wellbeing can be defined as a state of positive psychological functioning that allows students to thrive, flourish and learn. Wellbeing refers to a state of positive emotional and social functioning that we aim to nurture in all our students.

### Rationale

The Department of Education and Training (DET) is committed to providing safe, secure and high quality learning and development opportunities for every student in all Victorian schools. These students can only reach their full educational potential when they are happy, healthy and safe, and when there is a positive school culture that is fair, respectful, supportive and engaging.

Every member of the school community has a right to fully participate in an educational environment that is safe, supportive and inclusive and everyone deserves to be treated with respect and dignity.

### Purpose

The policy will relate to and be consistent with the 'Effective Schools are Engaging Schools: *Student Engagement Policy Guidelines*', in areas such as the encouragement of educational achievement and excellence, prevention of absences and inappropriate behaviour. The policy aims to:

- Foster a healthy school culture in which high levels of achievement take place within a positive social environment through engagement.
- Provide students with a safe learning environment where the risk of harm is minimised and students feel physically and emotionally secure.
- Provide support for individual circumstances when a student begins to disengage from their learning, when regular attendance is not consistent or positive behaviours are not demonstrated.
- Ensure all members of the school community are aware that corporal punishment is not permitted at Tecoma Primary School.

- Provide genuine opportunities for student/parent participation and student/parent voice
- Build a school environment based on positive behaviours and values.
- Provide prevention (cognitive, behavioural and emotional) and intervention for all students at risk.

This policy will also be in line with *The Student Engagement and Inclusion Guidance* which operationalises Ministerial Order 625 - Suspensions and Expulsions, which can be accessed at: <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/Documents/school/principals/participation/minorder625.PDF>

### **Section 1: School Profile**

Tecoma Primary School is situated in the foothills of the Dandenong Ranges on Melbourne's Outer-Eastern fringe, central to the township of Tecoma. The school opened as a part time school with Menzies Creek, in a two room shack called the "Pines." The name of the school changed from Upper Ferntree Gully, to Upwey, then Belgrave and finally Tecoma in 1961. Since its opening Tecoma Primary has established a proud history of providing high quality education to students that are drawn predominantly from Tecoma, Belgrave and Upwey.

Tecoma Primary School is an integral part of the community and has developed and maintains an excellent reputation. It strongly emphasises the importance of a close home-school partnership. This emphasis is reflected in the day-to-day involvement of parents in school activities and participation in decision-making. Families are generally very supportive of the school and each other. A genuine feeling of community spirit surrounds the school, with school facilities often being used after hours by other community groups. We are committed to zero tolerance of child abuse, which is led by our School Council, School Leadership Team, all staff and is shared openly and transparently with all members of our school community.

The school has a current enrolment of 371 students. The projected enrolment for 2017 is 385. Over the last few years the student numbers have steadily increased and it is expected to continue to do so over the next couple of years.

Tecoma Primary School is classified as a Like School Group 1, that is, there is a low proportion of Languages Other Than English (LOTE) speakers at home and a low proportion of parents in receipt of E.M.A payments.

At present we have two PSD (Program for Students with Disabilities) students identified and funded. A total of two Integration Aides support these students. We run our Reading Room Program, Literacy Support sessions and Quicksmart, which cater for the students identified as experiencing difficulty with their learning. Individual Learning Plans are established for selected students across all levels, for students working above and below their expected level.

Following a strong Transition Program from preschool, the school offers a comprehensive and sequential curriculum based on the Victorian Curriculum which is used to plan student learning programs, assess student progress and report to parents.

The Victorian Curriculum Foundation–10 (F–10) sets out what every student should learn during their first eleven years of schooling. The curriculum is the common set of knowledge and skills required by students for life-long learning, social development and active and informed citizenship.

The Victorian Curriculum F–10 incorporates the Australian Curriculum and reflects Victorian priorities and standards.

The design of the Victorian Curriculum F–10 is set out below:

Learning areas	Capabilities
<p><b>The Arts</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dance</li> <li>• Drama</li> <li>• Media Arts</li> <li>• Music</li> <li>• Visual Arts</li> <li>• Visual Communication Design</li> </ul> <p><b>English</b></p> <p><b>Health and Physical Education</b></p> <p><b>The Humanities</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Civics and Citizenship</li> <li>• Economics and Business</li> <li>• Geography</li> <li>• History</li> </ul> <p><b>Languages</b></p> <p><b>Mathematics</b></p> <p><b>Science</b></p> <p><b>Technologies</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Design and Technologies</li> <li>• Digital Technologies</li> </ul>	<p><b>Critical and Creative Thinking</b></p> <p><b>Ethical</b></p> <p><b>Intercultural</b></p> <p><b>Personal and Social</b></p>

The school is student and curriculum focused. It strives for and encourages maximum achievement in all areas of teaching and learning and student wellbeing. Specialist programs include Physical Education, Visual Arts, Performing Arts (Music), Science and LOTE (Japanese). Acknowledging the diversity of learning styles, interests and talents, the school provides a wide range of enrichment opportunities including:

- Swimming, sporting clinics, interschool sports,
- 3 - 6 camping program,
- Twilight Sports evening
- instrumental and percussion music, recorder, choir, orchestra, musical production
- Year 6 Leadership Program
- Kinder – Year 4, Prep-Year 5 Buddies,
- Life Education,
- Grade 5/6 Advanced Presentation Skills
- Curriculum based incursions/excursions
- Thinking Outside the Box (TOTB) Program for Gifted & Talented students
- Chess Club,
- Robotics Club,
- Code Club,
- Aerobics,

- University of New South Wales Testing,
- Out of School Hours Program

Information Communication Technologies are integrated into classroom practice via a school wide network and the use of i-Pads, notebooks and computers, with a ratio of 1 computer for every 2 students. We also have interactive white boards or televisions in every classroom.

Tecoma Primary School provides a balanced and inclusive curriculum, meeting children's academic, social and emotional needs and levels of development.

Our School Values are Respect, Integrity, Learning, Creativity, Personal Best and Community. These school values are woven through our classrooms and our learning, and we celebrate students' achievements through the values they demonstrate with their Student of the Week awards! Tecoma Primary School provides a broad curriculum that ensures opportunities and successes for all children. Our engagement and wellbeing goals and targets directly relate to our school improvement strategies, as outlined in our School's Strategic Plan and our Annual Implantation Plan. Our school has a reputation for its positive, caring environment which promotes and celebrates endeavour and the pursuit of excellence. We promote excellence in learning by providing quality programs that challenge and interest all students. Tecoma fosters the development of self-esteem, confidence, independence and co-operative skills.

We focus on monitoring student attendance and as a consequence during the year have continued to implement a variety of positive strategies to encourage regular student attendance such as, 'It's Not Okay to Be Away', Punctuality Star, Principal's attendance BBQ, etc.

Through the implementation of the KidsMatter framework, with a focus on the Bounce Back Wellbeing and Resilience Program, we will continue to focus on developing an emotionally resilient, welcoming, inclusive and safe school environment. Staff will continue to be trained in the 4 KidsMatter Components and Restorative Practices and will be supported to implement whole school strategies and approaches. We are committed to addressing bullying, including Cyberbullying (as addressed in our school's Anti-bullying (including Cyberbullying) and Anti-Harassment Policy.

## ***Section 2: The Principles for Health and Wellbeing***

At all times our school will focus on the *Principles for Health and Wellbeing*. These are a reminder of good practice when working with children and young people and are intended to promote, nurture and support the health and wellbeing of Victorian children and young people.

### ***Principle 1 – Maximise access and inclusion***

Quality education and support for all, with extra effort directed to ensuring education and support is accessible and inclusive to the most vulnerable and disadvantaged.

### ***Principle 2 – Focus on outcomes***

A focus on health, learning, development and wellbeing outcomes are upheld when designing, delivering, evaluating and improving education and support services.

### ***Principle 3 – Evidence-informed and reflective practice***

Policy and practice is informed by current and relevant evidence, known to be effective in improving outcomes. Research and evaluation is undertaken to grow the evidence base and enable effective and reflective practice.

***Principle 4 – Holistic approach***

Educators and support staff work collaboratively and professionals use multidisciplinary approaches and focus on the range of goals, aspirations and needs of children, young people and families.

***Principle 5 – Person-centred and family sensitive practice***

Successful schools see people in the context of their families and environment, and seek to support and empower people to lead and sustain healthy lives.

***Principle 6 – Partnerships with families and communities***

Ensuring children and young people have good health and wellbeing is the collective responsibility of families, schools, the community and government; requiring shared commitment and action.

***Principle 7 – Cultural competence***

To effectively meet the needs of all children, young people, requires an ability to understand and effectively communicate with people across cultures and recognise one's own world view.

***Principle 8 – Commitment to excellence***

Education providers and services have high expectations for those they work with, and continually assess their own work practices to find opportunities for improvement.

***Section 3: Engagement Strategies***

At Tecoma Primary School our positive school culture is predicated on student engagement being the basis for learning. To support this, our leadership team is actively engaged in developing classroom practice to ensure that our pedagogy and curriculum engages all students. Effective teaching, inclusive and engaging curriculum and respectful relationships between staff, students and parents, is promoted through regular whole staff professional development and professional learning teams that encourage innovative pedagogy developed using DET's E5 instructional model, The Victorian Curriculum, the Principles of Health and Wellbeing and the Principles of Learning and Teaching (PoLT).

Our school has a number of initiatives and programs which provide opportunities that contribute to the school effectively engaging students in their learning. Engagement strategies focus on personalised learning and the use of technology.

We have a number of **Universal** (school wide) engagement strategies that create safe, inclusive, empowering environments that foster an enthusiasm for learning and support student wellbeing which are in place to ensure students remain enthusiastic about learning.

These include:

- Pro-social behaviours promoted through programs such as Bounce Back, KidsMatter, Restorative Practices, Circle Time, lunchtime activities lead by the Student Leaders and Out of Hours School Care.
- Student voice which is encouraged and developed through Student Leadership (such as the Year 6 Leadership Program, Junior School Council and student led assemblies). Other roles of responsibility provide opportunities for students to influence change within the school community.

- A range of opportunities for students to be involved and feel connected to the community such as KidsMatter whole school events, whole school musical Productions, interschool sport, community art displays, Choir and Aerobics, etc.
- Development of intensive literacy and numeracy improvement strategies (reflected in our Annual Implementation Plan) which are implemented as part of the school improvement agenda and in response to the changing demographics.
- The school provides multiple opportunities for proactively engaging parents/carers and the wider community to be involved in the schools programs such as classroom helpers program, Reading Room Helpers, School Council and sub-committees, Parent Network Committee and the Parent Opinion Survey.
- Encouraging students to achieve full attendance to maximise their ability to learn and our teachers' ability to teach effectively.
- Adaption of current pedagogical knowledge and thinking to engage students in meaningful learning experiences.
- Whole school approach to Restorative Practices to encourage engagement; build pride, respect and responsibility.
- An embedded Professional Development culture which gives high priority to ensure strategies and approaches are adopted and implemented.

For those students who require extra support, or when problems arise **Targeted** (population specific) strategies that meet the varied needs of vulnerable cohorts, including prevention and intervention strategies and **Individual** (student specific) engagement strategies, for students at risk, in relation to consistent attendance or when positive behaviours are not demonstrated, are in place. These include:

- Early intervention to identify/respond to student needs for social and emotional support.
- Recognising and responding to the diverse needs of our students through the Program for Students with Disabilities support program.
- Personalised adaption of current pedagogical knowledge and thinking to engage students in meaningful learning experiences.
- Promoting to parents the importance of ensuring their children attend school each day to maximise their ability to learn and our teachers' ability to teach effectively.
- DET SSSO's - School Psychologist and Speech Therapist
- Brave HQ – Private Psychologist

#### Model for Whole School Values:



<b>VALUES</b>	<b>EXPLANATION</b>	<b>CORE CAPABILITIES, OUTCOMES &amp; BELIEFS</b>
<b>Community</b>	<i>Being an active member of our school community. It is contributing to our school community to make it a better place for everyone</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Actively taking part in school activities.</li> <li>Positively promoting Tecoma Primary School and the students, parents and staff who are members of the community.</li> <li>Looking out for each other and making sure others are safe, happy and health.</li> <li>Making sure the school is clean, tidy and safe.</li> </ul>
<b>Personal Best</b>	<i>Trying your hardest to succeed. It is always making the effort to do your very best and to enjoy the benefits that come with hard work.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Giving Effort – thinking that the harder I try the more successful I will be.</li> <li>Working Tough – in order to be successful in the future, I sometimes have to do things that are not easy or fun at the present.</li> <li>Taking Risks – trying new and difficult things.</li> <li>Accepting Myself – celebrating personal achievements without comparing self to others and being positive when mistakes are made.</li> <li>Being Independent – always have a go, be yourself and don't worry what others think.</li> </ul>
<b>Integrity</b>	<i>The quality of having a sense of honesty and truthfulness consistently. It is showing moral excellence</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Social Responsibility – understanding that it's important to be caring, to be fair, to be honest and tell the truth, to have integrity, to respect others and have nice manners and to act responsibly by making good choices.</li> <li>Playing by the Rules – value the necessity for all to follow important school and home rules while being part of a team.</li> </ul>
<b>Learning</b>	<i>Learning empowers us to make wise choices, solve problems and prepare ourselves for the future.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Setting Goals – understanding that setting a goal can help me to be more successful at a task.</li> <li>Planning My Time – thinking about how long it will take me to do my schoolwork and planning enough time to get it done.</li> </ul>
<b>Respect</b>	<i>Displaying your best manners at all times. You can accept others differences and treat others the way you wish to be treated.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Being Tolerant of Others – accepting everyone and not making judgments based on differences or behaviour.</li> <li>Social Responsibility – understanding that it's important to be caring, to be fair, to be honest and tell the truth, to have integrity, to respect others and have nice manners and to act responsibly by making good choices.</li> </ul>
<b>Creativity</b>	<i>Creativity allows us to use our imagination. It provides us with the ability to look at things from a different perspective.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Giving things a go.</li> <li>Accepting ideas which are different to your own.</li> <li>Listening to others and what they have to say.</li> </ul>

## ***Section 4: Rights and Responsibilities***

### **Overview**

The Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act (2006) outlines 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.

### **Legislation**

The following legislation needs to be considered when determining rights and responsibilities of all members of the school community:

1. Equal Opportunity Act 1995.
2. Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006.
3. Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (in conjunction with the Disability Standards for Education 2005).
4. Education Act 1958.
5. Education Training Reform Act (2006), which prohibits the use of corporal punishment in any Victorian Government School.

### **School Policies**

The following policies need to be considered and consistent with implementing effective practice within the school community.

1. Child Safety Policy
2. Bullying (including Cyberbullying) and Harassment Policy
3. Curriculum Policy
4. First Aid Policy
5. Anaphylaxis Policy
6. Sunsmart Policy
7. Uniform Policy
8. Internet Usage.
9. Formation of Classes Policy
10. Homework Policy
11. Transition Policy
12. Duty of Care Policy
13. Student Attendance Policy
14. Gifted and Talented
15. Student Leadership.
16. Occupational Health and Safety.
17. Working With Children Policy
18. Mandatory Reporting Policy
19. Emergency Management Plan

### Whole School Rights and Responsibilities

At Tecoma Primary School we expect high standards of student behaviour based on cooperation, mutual respect and responsibility and self discipline. We promote positive, non-discriminatory relationships amongst students, parents, staff and the wider community.

#### **Whole School:**

<b>Rights</b>	<b>Responsibilities</b>
To be valued and treated with respect	To build positive relationships with the school community
To receive support in difficult situations from the school community	To provide support to each other
To be free of harassment	To ensure others are not harassed

#### **Students:**

<b>Rights</b>	<b>Responsibilities</b>
To work and play without interference	To allow others to work and play without interference To report bullying to an adult
To be treated fairly and courteously	To be polite, courteous and well mannered
To learn in a secure environment	To allow others to learn

#### **Staff:**

<b>Rights</b>	<b>Responsibilities</b>
To be treated with respect by students, parents and peers	To treat students in a way that develops self-esteem To communicate positively with parents and peers
To expect students to follow the Engagement Guidelines	To follow the Engagement Guidelines To use logical consequences and Restorative Practices To provide a Duty of Care to students To keep records of significant disciplinary actions

#### **Parents:**

<b>Rights</b>	<b>Responsibilities</b>
To expect that their child will be educated in a secure environment in which care, courtesy and respect for the rights of others are encouraged	Ensure students attend school and have the appropriate learning materials and attitude
To be contacted when their child continually disregards the School Engagement Policy or is involved in a major incident	Promote respectful relationships

## ***Section 5: Shared Expectations***

Tecoma Primary School has developed shared expectations to ensure that the learning, safety and rights of all are respected. The expectations are intended to be positive in that they set out what is an expected and appropriate behavior 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.

### **Staff Engagement:**

#### **Responsibilities**

The *School Leadership Team* will:

- uphold the right of every child to receive an education
- ensure the school complies with its Duty of Care obligations to each student as well as its obligations under the equal opportunity and human rights legislation
- identify the diversity of the school community and deliver teaching and learning, educational and extra-curricular activities and community services inclusive and responsive to student needs.

The *Staff* will:

- develop flexible pedagogical styles to engage different learners
- deliver curriculum and assessment that challenges and extends students learning
- develop positive relationships with students that promote engagement, wellbeing and learning
- developing a positive school culture through providing opportunities for student voice.

#### **Attendance**

In compliance with Departmental procedures *School Staff* will;

- promote regular attendance with all members of the school community and;
- monitor and follow up on absences.

#### **Behaviour**

Tecoma Primary School will support and promote positive behaviours by developing and implementing shared behavioural expectations with the school community through a staged response.

The *School Leadership Team* will:

- lead and promote preventative approaches to behavioural issues
- monitor the profile of behaviour issues at the school and the effectiveness of implemented strategies
- provide professional development for staff to build their capacity to promote positive behaviours.

The *Staff* will:

- use the Student Engagement and Wellbeing Policy as a basis for negotiating class-based shared expectations with students
- teach students social competencies through curriculum content and pedagogical approach
- employ behaviour management strategies that reflect the behaviours expected from students
- build a collegiate atmosphere with other school staff to share strategies and support each other to reflect on one's own behaviour management approach .

### **Student Engagement:**

#### **Responsibilities**

All *Students* are expected to:

- respect, value and learn from the differences of others
- have high expectations that they can learn
- reflect on and learn from their own differences.

#### **Attendance**

All *Students* are expected to come to school every school day throughout the year. (If students cannot attend their parent/carer must provide a suitable explanation to the school).

#### **Behaviour**

All *Students* will:

- support each other's learning by behaving in a way that is at all times respectful
- be considerate and supportive of others
- demonstrate behaviour and attitudes that support the wellbeing and learning for all and contributes to a positive school environment that is safe, inclusive and happy
- understand that bullying, including cyber-bullying, harassment, violence, property damage, inappropriate language and disrupting the learning of other students is unacceptable.

### **Parent/Carer Engagement:**

#### **Responsibilities**

All *Parents/Carers* are:

- expected to support the school's efforts to educate young people to live in a diverse world by promoting an understanding and appreciation of diversity in the home
- expected to help the school to provide student-centered responses by providing all relevant information to the school
- encouraged to actively participate in supporting their child's learning by building a positive relationship with the school
- encouraged to work with the school through attendance at parent-teacher meetings and responding to communications in a timely manner.

## Attendance

*Parents/carers* are expected to ensure that enrolment details for their children are correct, that their children attend school regularly and that, when a child is absent from school, parents/carers advise the school as soon as possible.

## Behaviour

*Parents/carers* should understand the schools behavioral expectations and aim to provide a consistent approach that supports their child's learning and engagement in and out of school.

## **Section 6: School Actions**

### Attendance

At Tecoma Primary School, absences often mean students miss important stages in the development of their learning, causing them to find 'catching up' difficult. The following are ways in which we promote school attendance:

- Attendance practices reflect DET's philosophy of 'Its Not OK to be Away'.
- All student absences are recorded twice a day (morning and afternoon) by teachers, and are aggregated on to our CASES21 database.
- The school recognises illness as a reasonable ground for an absence.
- Clear written/verbal statements are made regularly to parents/carers/students about school and community attendance expectations.
- The Principal will closely monitor student attendance through the evaluation of student absence reports on CASES21.
- CASES 21 data will be utilised to identify students who are at risk of poor attendance and possible disengagement from school.
- If within three days of the initial absence parents/carers have not provided an explanation/satisfactory explanation, contact will be made by the classroom teacher or nominated representative.
- The Primary Welfare Officer or the Principal will contact parents of students with high levels of unexplained or unapproved absences/lateness, with the view to developing and implementing strategies to minimise absences.
- Ongoing unexplained absences/lateness, or lack of cooperation regarding student attendance will result in a formal attendance conference being organised. This may lead to the establishment of a Student Support Group.
- This Support Group will be convened by the Principal (or nominee) and attended by key professionals. An Attendance Improvement Plan may be developed. Unresolved attendance issues are reported by the Principal to DET and may also be reported to the Department of Human Services (DHS).
- Student attendance figures will appear on the student's mid-year and end of year reports.
- DET and enrolment auditors will be given complete access to all student attendance records if requested.
- Whole-school modelling of punctuality is expected and regularly monitored.
- All absence notes and records of communication will be retained and stored at the school for a minimum of 21 years.

## **Behavioural Consequences**

The *Student Engagement and Inclusion Guidance* provides schools with the guidance and tools they needed to create and maintain positive, safe and engaging school cultures.

This Guidance operationalises Ministerial Order 625 - Suspensions and Expulsions, which takes effect from 1 March, 2014. It provides guidance as to how you fulfill your obligations under Ministerial Order 625.

### **In-school Discipline**

Graded in-school disciplinary measures can be used to respond to a range of challenging student behaviour and may be modified to suit particular circumstances as needed. Whilst these measures take place on school premises they may occur outside school hours.

As with all forms of discipline, graded in-school disciplinary measures should be clearly set out in and aligned with the school's student engagement policy and expectations around behaviour and should be used in a way that is proportionate to the behaviour being addressed.

<i>To promote cooperation a student could choose to:</i>	<i>Cooperation is difficult when a student:</i>	<i>Appropriate responses to minor/initial incidents:</i>	<i>Major or repeated incidents:</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider other classmates needs</li> <li>• Think of ways for everyone to have a turn</li> <li>• Encourage everyone to have a say</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Always has to be first</li> <li>• Refuses to take turns</li> <li>• Ignores the ideas of others</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Speak to child</li> <li>• Student to reflect on the incident ( student incident report may be completed)</li> <li>• Reflection Sheet may allow opportunity for student to take responsibility for actions and repair damage done to people or property</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parents contacted</li> <li>• Withdrawal of privileges, with explanation of how behavior impacts on self and others</li> <li>• Behavior Management Plan</li> <li>• Student Support Group</li> <li>• In school suspension.</li> </ul>

### **Withdrawal of privileges**

Schools can withdraw student privileges as a consequence of breaching classroom or school behavioural standards. The specific privileges that are withdrawn will vary between schools and even students at the same school, however they may include things such as representing the school at inter-school sports or attendance at a school event.

When withdrawing privileges as a disciplinary measure, schools should ensure that:

- The withdrawal is time-limited
- The reasons for and period of the withdrawal is clearly communicated to the student
- The student is made aware of the behaviour standards expected in order for the privileges to be reinstated
- Consideration is given to the impact on the student's engagement (i.e. where the withdrawal of a privilege may contribute to a student's risk of disengaging from school, strategies are put in place to maintain student engagement during the withdrawal).

### **Withdrawal from class**

If a student's behaviour significantly interferes with the rights of other students to learn or the capacity of a teacher to teach a class or where there is possibility of harm to others, that student may be temporarily removed from regular classroom activities. In more serious cases the student may be required to leave the classroom for a specified period of time.

Schools have a duty of care to ensure that students are supervised at all times, including when they are removed from a class. Where appropriate, parents and carers should be informed of such withdrawals.

Withdrawal from class does not constitute formal school exclusion such as suspension (including in-school suspension) or expulsion.

### **Detention**

Detention is an appropriate response for a wide range of less serious classroom and school behaviour breaches. Detention can effectively reinforce to students the importance of maintaining appropriate behaviour standards.

During detention teachers may instruct a student to finish school work which has not been completed in regular classroom time as a result of the behaviour, new work or other duties. No more than half the time allocated for any recess may be used for this. Where students are required to undertake detention after school hours, the time should not exceed forty-five minutes.

Where the decision is made that an after-school detention is appropriate, the principal should ensure that parents or carers are informed at least one day before the detention. Where family circumstances are such that an after-school detention would create undue hardship, schools may choose to negotiate alternative disciplinary measures with the parent or carer. Examples include where students regularly supervise younger siblings in the absence of parents or carers.

Tecoma Primary School is permitted to detain students but are encouraged to take into account family circumstances and negotiate with parents and carers as appropriate.

### **Exclusion from school**

In some instances it may be appropriate to suspend or expel a student who consistently compromises the safety and order of the school in order to protect the learning environment for remaining students and continue with effective teaching.

Suspension and expulsion are serious disciplinary measures and are best reserved for incidents when other measures have not produced a satisfactory response or where there is an immediate threat to another person and immediate action is required.

### ***Student Support Group***

A Student Support Group may be convened by schools to exchange information and facilitate solutions to behavioral problems or difficulties of students. In general, they will be convened at the school, although they could occur at alternative locations agreed to by the school and parents.

These meetings are to be held at a time suitable both to the school and to the parents. The purpose of procedures for such meetings will vary depending on the needs of individuals and schools, but they promote positive behaviours through a staged response. As well as teachers, parents and the student, the meeting could involve a person requested by the parents, principal or nominee and any support staff who have been involved with the student and/or the student's family or who have particular relevant expertise. If the principal considers it warranted, or the student or the student's parents request, the principal must ensure suitable language interpretation facilities are made available.

A brief written statement including a list of participants and agreed outcomes should be maintained to assist future problem-solving processes at the school. The statement should be verified by the parents and/or student and remain confidential.

### **Suspension**

Suspension is the process of excluding a student from the standard instruction or educational opportunities being provided to other students at the school for part of a day, a full day, or multiple days.

Suspension is a serious disciplinary measure and is best reserved for incidents when other measures have not produced a satisfactory response. The procedures for suspension are set out in Ministerial Order 625

A summary of the procedural requirements for Suspensions are outlined in the Suspension Process Flowchart (Appendix 1)

To meet the expulsion process requirements use the Suspension Process Checklist (Appendix 2).

### **Grounds for suspension**

In order for suspension to be an option, the following conditions must be in place:

The student's behaviour must have occurred:

- whilst attending school;
- or travelling to or from school;
- or while engaged in any school activity away from the school;
- or travelling to or from any school activity.
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The student's behaviour must meet one or more of the following conditions:

- a) behaves in such a way as to pose a danger, whether actual, perceived or threatened, to the health, safety or wellbeing of any person;
- b) causes significant damage to or destruction of property;

- c) commits or attempts to commit or is knowingly involved in the theft of property;
- d) possesses, uses or sells or deliberately assists another person to possess, use or sell illicit substances or weapons;
- e) fails to comply with any clear and reasonable instruction of a staff member so as to pose a danger, whether actual, perceived or threatened, to the health, safety or wellbeing of any person;
- f) consistently engages in behaviour that vilifies, defames, degrades or humiliates another person based on age; breastfeeding; gender; identity; impairment; industrial activity; lawful sexual activity; marital status; parent/carer status or status as a carer; physical features; political belief or activity; pregnancy; race; religious belief or activity; sex; sexual orientation; personal association (whether as a relative or otherwise) with a person who is identified by reference to any of the above attributes;
- g) consistently behaves in an unproductive manner that interferes with the wellbeing, safety or educational opportunities of any other student.

Please note: For incidents between students that occur outside of school hours or in locations other than those listed above, a suspension cannot be used as a response. The impact of cyberbullying (and other behaviours) outside of school hours/off school premises on schools is acknowledged, however, if the behaviour occurs solely outside of school hours/grounds suspension is not an available recourse. If incidents outside of school hours are connected to behaviour that does meet the grounds and location requirements for suspension, this external behaviour may be considered when determining the response to an in-school incident.

For more information, see Bully Stoppers: Schools and Cybersafety and Step-by-step Guides (for responding to online incidents of concern).

### **Authority to suspend a student**

Only principals have authority to make the final decision to suspend a student. This authority cannot be delegated.

School staff may provide advice to inform the principal's decision whether to suspend a student and may assist in the management of the student's behaviour and/or in communications with the parents, carers or relevant persons. Principals hold ultimate responsibility for ensuring that all processes are followed, correctly.

The principal must provide the parents of the student with a copy of the *Procedures for Suspension* brochure and a notice of suspension as *per documentation house in the INCIDENT REPORT BOOK*, on the day on which the suspension commences or within twenty four hours thereof.

The principal shall also provide the president of the school council with a copy of the notice of suspension.

At any time during the suspension of a student the parent can request a suspension conference. The principal may convene a suspension conference at any time, but must convene a suspension conference when a student has been suspended for five continuous school days on

any one occasion and when a student has been suspended for a total of fifteen school days in any one school year.

The suspension conference will involve a formal meeting convened by the school principal or nominee. The participants will involve the principal, student support group, parents, student and other key professionals. Conference proceedings must remain confidential.

A suspension conference is to be conducted during the period of the suspension or as soon as practicable thereafter. The period of suspension shall not be extended due to delays in holding a suspension conference.

A suspension conference will consider the educational, welfare and disciplinary strategies in relation to the pupil and will consider other options for meeting the pupil's educational needs.

### **In-school suspension**

When considering the decision to suspend a student, it may also be useful to explore an in-school suspension. An in-school suspension is where the student is excluded from the standard instruction or educational opportunities being provided to other students, but can still undertake educational activities on the school premises for the period of the suspension.

In-school suspensions should focus on encouraging the student to exhibit more positive behaviour, to increase their level of participation and where appropriate, to learn problem solving and/or conflict resolution skills.

#### **Options for in-school suspension include:**

Having the student accompany an experienced teacher/appropriate staff member to their classes for the day

- Participating in a work-based in-school suspension (e.g. working outdoors or preparation of educational materials)
- Providing a dedicated room or area where students can complete school work under appropriate supervision.
- The same process (including record-keeping) must be followed for in-school suspension as for out of school suspensions.

### **Immediate suspensions**

The principal may implement a suspension with immediate effect if the student's behaviour is such that they are putting the health, safety and wellbeing of themselves, or any other person at significant risk.

Where an immediate suspension is imposed, the principal has a duty of care to provide supervision of the student until they can be collected by a parent, carer, or an emergency contact nominated by the parent or carer. If the parent, carer or emergency contact is unable to collect the student, the student must be adequately supervised by a member of staff until the end of the school day.

It may be appropriate to implement a suspension with an immediate effect whilst the student is on an excursion or school camp. In these situations, if a student's parent, carer or emergency contact is unable to collect the student, they will need to be supervised until the end of the camp or excursion. If this is the case, it is suggested that the student be removed from any activity

organised as part of the excursion or camp. It may also be suitable to assign the student an appropriate task or school work to go on with.

### **Period of suspension**

Suspending a student can have serious implications for the student's engagement in learning therefore suspension should be applied for the shortest time necessary. In determining the period of suspension, the principal must note:

- The period of suspension must not exceed five school days.
- The suspension must not result in the student being suspended for more than 15 school days in the school year unless there is prior written approval from the Regional Director. To seek approval from the Regional Director you can use the Request for Approval - Suspension Over 15 Days Form (Appendix 3)
- If the period of the suspension is longer than the days left in the term, the principal should consider the likely disruption to the student's learning before imposing a suspension that will continue into the following term.

### **The relevant person**

Due to the seriousness of suspension and expulsion, Ministerial Order 625 requires that students who are subject to suspension and/or expulsion processes have a 'relevant person' to participate in the process to support and advocate for them. For most students this will be a parent or carer.

In situations where the parent or carer is unavailable or unwilling to act as the relevant person for their child, they can nominate an alternative relevant person. For more information on this role, see: Identifying a Relevant Person.

### **Students with separated parents**

For students who have separated parents, it is important to remember that suspension and expulsion are serious disciplinary measures and therefore all parents and carers are entitled to be notified of the intention to suspend or expel the student.

In circumstances where there is more than one parent or carer who would like to participate in the suspension and expulsion process, it is important to involve all of them in the process.

If the principal of a Victorian government school needs advice and assistance on how to proceed with the suspension or expulsion in these circumstances, it is strongly recommended that they contact the Department's Legal Division. The Legal Division can be contacted on (03) 9637 3146 or via email on [legal.services@edumail.vic.gov.au](mailto:legal.services@edumail.vic.gov.au)

### **Expulsion**

Expulsion is the process of permanently excluding the student from the school in which he or she is currently enrolled. As the most extreme disciplinary measure available to a principal, it should only be used after other forms of behaviour management have been exhausted and the school can demonstrate evidence that this has occurred. The student's behaviour must also be of such magnitude that expulsion is the only available mechanism.

Expulsion cannot be implemented as a consequence for events of a novel nature such as one-off pranks that do not cause any harm to other students or members of the school community.

Grounds and procedures for expulsion are set out in Ministerial Order 625.

A summary of the procedural requirements for Expulsion are outlined in the *Expulsion Process Flowchart* (Appendix 4).

To meet the expulsion process requirements use the *Expulsion Process Checklist* (Appendix 5).

### **Grounds for expulsion**

In order for expulsion to be an option, the following conditions must be in place:

The student's behaviour must have occurred:

- whilst attending school; or
- travelling to or from school; or
- while engaged in any school activity away from the school; or
- travelling to or from any school activity

The student's behaviour must meet one or more of the following conditions:

- a) behaves in such a way as to pose a danger, whether actual, perceived or threatened, to the health, safety or wellbeing of any person;
- b) causes significant damage to or destruction of property;
- c) commits or attempts to commit or is knowingly involved in the theft of property;
- d) possesses, uses or sells or deliberately assists another person to possess, use or sell illicit substances or weapons;
- e) fails to comply with any clear and reasonable instruction of a staff member so as to pose a danger, whether actual, perceived or threatened, to the health, safety or wellbeing of any person;
- f) consistently engages in behaviour that vilifies, defames, degrades or humiliates another person based on age; breastfeeding; gender; identity; impairment; industrial activity; lawful sexual activity; marital status; parent/carer status or status as a carer; physical features; political belief or activity; pregnancy; race; religious belief or activity; sex; sexual orientation; personal association (whether as a relative or otherwise) with a person who is identified by reference to any of the above attributes;
- g) consistently behaves in an unproductive manner that interferes with the wellbeing, safety or educational opportunities of any other student.

The student's behaviour must also be of such magnitude that expulsion is the only available mechanism. In this regard, the principal must consider the need of the student to receive an education compared to the need to maintain the health, safety and wellbeing of other students and staff at the school and the need to maintain the effectiveness of the school's educational programs.

Under Victorian Law, in deciding whether to expel a student, principals must undertake an assessment of that course of action under the Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006. In addition, when determining whether to expel a student with a disability, principals must be sure that reasonable adjustments have been made to assist the student to manage the behaviours where this is a manifestation of disability.

### **Authority to expel a student**

Only principals have authority to make the final decision to expel a student. This authority cannot be delegated.

School staff may provide advice to inform the principal's decision whether to expel a student and may assist in the management of the student's behaviour and/or in communications with the parents, carers or relevant persons. Principals hold ultimate responsibility for ensuring that all processes are followed correctly.

The principal is responsible for a student's expulsion. The principal must notify the regional director that a student support group is being convened to discuss expulsion.

The principal must convene a student support group meeting to:

- (a) Provide the student and their parents/carers with a Notice of Expulsion before the day on which the expulsion commences.
- (b) Provide a copy of the Procedures for Expulsion, to the student and their parents/carers.
- (c) Identify the future educational options most suited to the students needs.

Within twenty-four hours of the commencement of the expulsion, the Principal must forward a copy of the Notice of Expulsion to the Regional Director with a written Expulsion Report. These forms are available online at

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/participation/Pages/expulsionprocess.aspx>

### **Removing a student from school while considering an expulsion**

If a student's behaviour is serious enough to warrant expulsion and poses danger to staff and students, a suspension with immediate effect may be implemented while the expulsion is being considered.

If consideration and/or implementation of an expulsion is going to take longer than the maximum suspension period of five consecutive days, principals can apply to the Regional Director for an extension. To apply for approval use the Request for Approval - Suspension Over 5 days form. (Appendix 6).

### **Students in out-of-home care**

The Out-of-Home Care Education Commitment: A Partnering Agreement between the Department of Human Services, Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, the Catholic Education Commission of Victoria and Independent Schools Victoria (the Partnering Agreement) commits all parties to improve the educational experience and outcomes of children and young people in out-of-home care in Victoria.

As part of the Partnering Agreement, an Education Support Guarantee for children and young people in out-of-home care has been established and commits schools and education-related health and wellbeing services and programs to providing an increased level of support and responsiveness to the educational needs of children and young people in out-of-home care.

In all cases where a student residing in out-of-home care is being considered for expulsion, the relevant Regional Director must be notified so that obligations in the Out-of-Home Care Education Commitment can be met.

For more information, see: Out-of-Home Care Education Commitment: A Partnering Agreement at <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/Documents/school/teachers/health/a4partnering.pdf>

### **Students with disabilities**

When a student has a disability that is relevant to the expulsion process and may impact upon placement decisions, the regional office should be notified to contribute to support and planning.

For further advice and support contact: Regions

### **Students with separated parents**

For students who have separated parents, it important to remember that suspension and expulsion are serious disciplinary measures and therefore all parents and carers are entitled to be notified of the intention to suspend or expel the student. In circumstances where there is more than one parent or carer who would like to participate in the suspension and expulsion process, it is important to involve all of them in the process.

If the principal of a Victorian government school needs advice and assistance on how to proceed with the suspension or expulsion in these circumstances, it is strongly recommended that they contact the Department's Legal Division on (03) 9637 3146 or via email on [legal.services@edumail.vic.gov.au](mailto:legal.services@edumail.vic.gov.au)

### ***Transition Arrangements***

If a school expels a student, the school must schedule a meeting with the destination school or registered training organisation of the expelled student.

### ***Expulsion Appeal Process***

A principal's decision to expel a student can be appealed by the student or the student's parents/carers.

The principal must provide the student and parent/carers with an Expulsion Appeal proforma (also available online at <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/participation/Pages/expulsionprocess.aspx>)

The appeal must be lodged with the principal within ten school days of receiving the Notice of Expulsion and the principal must provide the regional director with a copy of the Expulsion Appeal within twenty-four hours.

**EVALUATION:**

Evaluation of this policy will be carried out by the Education Committee as part of the Education Committee's cyclic review process, in three years time, or beforehand, if a significant issue arises.