

**STUDENT ENGAGEMENT POLICY**  
**Clifton Hill Primary School**  
**March 2014**



**PURPOSE**

The purpose of the *Student Engagement Policy* is to articulate the school community's shared expectations in the areas of student engagement, attendance and behaviour. The policy supports the rights and outlines the expectations of every member of the school community to engage in and promote a safe and inclusive educational environment.

**OUR VALUES**

**We are committed to challenging, lifelong learning.**

We promote the development of thinking that is:

- Creative
- Curious
- Flexible
- Reflective

We promote:

- Accepting responsibility
- Persistence
- Finding humour
- Having confidence to take risks
- Taking purposeful action based on our learning

**We are committed to being respectful individuals and thoughtful, active, global citizens.**

We promote:

- Social justice
- Environmental sustainability
- Team work
- Empathy
- Honesty
- Meaningful and effective communication

**IMPLEMENTATION**

The Student Engagement Policy is a shared responsibility between school, home and the school community. This policy is divided into the following sections that outline the way in which Clifton Hill Primary School community seeks to achieve the purpose of this policy:

1. School Profile Statement
2. Rights and Responsibilities
  - 2.1 Student rights and responsibilities
  - 2.2 Staff rights and responsibilities
  - 2.3 Parent/Carer rights and responsibilities
3. Creating a Positive and Engaging School Culture
  - 3.1 Promoting Positive Values and Behaviours
  - 3.2 Proactively Engaging with Parents/Carers
  - 3.3 Linking to the Local Community
- 3 Responding to individual students
- 4 Promoting Positive Behaviours Through a Staged Response
  - 5.1 Unacceptable behaviour
  - 5.2 Bullying

- 5.3 Cyber-safety
- 5.4 Prevention
- 5.5 Intervention
- 5.6 Student Support Group
- 5.7 Escalation of Student Behavioural Difficulties
- 5.8 Suspension
  - 5.8.1 In-school suspension
- 5.9 Expulsion
- 5 Promoting School Attendance
  - 6.1 School approach
  - 6.2 Expectations for attendance – Parents
  - 6.3 Expectations for attendance – Students
- 7 Guidelines
- 8 Review

## **1.0 SCHOOL PROFILE STATEMENT**

Information about the environmental context of Clifton Hill Primary School is updated annually as part of our annual reporting process and can be found on the school website: <http://www.cliftonhillps.vic.edu.au/>

## **2.0 RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

This policy recognises student, staff and parent/carer rights and responsibilities.

### **2.1 Student Rights and Responsibilities**

All students have the right to:

- Learn
- Be treated fairly and with respect by all members of the school community
- Receive assistance from others
- Have privacy respected
- Be in a secure and happy environment
- Be an individual
- Feel free to express themselves
- Be able to talk about their problems
- Be listened to
- Expect their property to be safe
- Experience success

All students have the responsibility to:

- Allow others to learn
- Work to the best of their ability
- Respect and value others
- Accept and abide by school rules
- Set a good example
- Cooperate with others
- Respect the privacy of others
- Ensure a safe, clean and happy school environment
- Respect property
- Encourage others to experience success
- Be punctual

## **2.2 Staff Rights and Responsibilities**

All teachers and support staff have the right to:

- Be free from disruption in the teaching and learning process
- Be treated fairly and with respect by all members of the school community
- Be supported and assisted by other staff
- Appropriate support from the school community

All teachers and support staff have the responsibility to:

- Provide effective teaching and learning practices
- Pursue relevant continued learning opportunities relating to their own interests and areas of need and to the needs of the school
- Provide adequate supervision of students
- Support and encourage teaching colleagues and other school staff
- Encourage awareness and understanding of school rules
- Implement the Student Engagement Policy
- Request advice and assistance when needed

## **2.3 Parent/Carer Rights and Responsibilities**

All parents/carers have the right to:

- Have access to staff at convenient, mutually agreed times
- Be informed and be given the opportunity to express themselves on matters of school policy
- Be informed about the progress of their children at school
- Be consulted about serious, inappropriate behaviours involving their children
- Be treated fairly and with respect by all members of the school community

All parents/carers have the responsibility to:

- Encourage good behaviour in their children
- Support school staff in their efforts to maintain a positive teaching and learning environment
- Support school staff in discipline procedures associated with the implementation of the Student Engagement Policy
- Treat others as they would like to be treated themselves
- Collaboratively share responsibility with the school staff for their child's education

## **3.0 CREATING A POSITIVE AND ENGAGING SCHOOL CULTURE**

This Student Engagement Policy is underpinned by the need to create a positive and engaging school culture. At Clifton Hill Primary School we are committed to creating a positive school culture by:

- Establishing positive and respectful relationships, particularly between teachers, students and parents
- Establishing a learning community that provides multiple and differentiated opportunities for students to experience success
- Valuing the diversity of our student population
- Developing a learning and teaching culture that promotes student belonging and connectedness

### **3.1 Promoting Positive Values and Behaviours**

At Clifton Hill Primary School we promote positive values and behaviours through a whole-school focus and making connections between these values and the curriculum. This includes:

- Encouraging students to work with others, and to take greater responsibility for their own learning and participation at school through learning within the Physical, Personal and Social Learning domain from the Victorian Essential Learning Standards (VELS)
- Incorporating other resources, including Habits of Mind and You Can Do It! for teaching and learning positive social values and behaviours.
- Integrating other programs and practices such as: prep and grade six transition programs; a whole school buddy system; Seasons for Growth; regular whole school assemblies; and a range of multi-age and extra-curricular activities offered during school hours.

### **3.2 Proactively Engaging with Parents/Carers**

At Clifton Hill Primary School we support the effective involvement of all families as equal partners in the education of children. All staff aim to contribute to a welcoming culture for parents/carers and families. This includes:

- Ensuring all parents/carers are aware of the school's Student Engagement Policy
- Facilitating effective school-to-home and home-to-school communications
- Providing volunteer opportunities to enable parents/carers to contribute
- Involving families through home-reading and other curriculum-related initiatives
- Involving families as participants in school decision-making
- Providing opportunities to enhance parenting knowledge and skills

### **3.3 Linking to the Local Community**

At Clifton Hill Primary School we acknowledge that linking with the local community provides access to an extended network of community members, professionals and educators who can provide expertise that can build the capacity of our school to respond to the needs of our students. We aim to develop:

- Partnerships between schools and community-based service providers involving shared responsibility for addressing common areas of concern
- Collaboration with other schools through network and cluster arrangements

### **4.0 RESPONDING TO INDIVIDUAL STUDENTS**

Clifton Hill Primary School is committed to identifying and responding to individual students who require additional support. These coordinated early intervention and prevention strategies:

- Include input from staff, parents, students and other specialists
- Focus on students that are at a higher risk of disengagement from education
- Are targeted at students displaying:
  - Underachievement in social and/or academic spheres
  - Inappropriate coping skills
  - Stress reactions
  - Depressive symptoms

## **5.0 PROMOTING POSITIVE BEHAVIOURS THROUGH A STAGED RESPONSE**

Clifton Hill Primary School staff recognise that some students require additional support to develop pro-social, positive behaviours. Some students who are at risk of disengagement from their learning require evidence-based, targeted interventions that are monitored regularly to assist them to improve their wellbeing and educational performance. These students are best supported in calm, consistent and differentiated classroom environments that cater for their individual needs and provide additional support. Students with problem behaviours can be responded to through a staged response.

### **5.1 UNACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOUR**

Students have the right to be safe and secure. The following are examples of behaviour considered to be intimidating or dangerous and therefore unacceptable:

- Any behaviour deemed as bullying, for example direct physical bullying, direct verbal bullying and indirect bullying (see section 5.2)
- Fighting, or any other form of aggressive behaviour
- Throwing sand, stones or other dangerous objects
- Using or carrying weapons (sticks, knives, etc)
- Harassment (cultural, religious, racial, gender/sexuality and related to disability)
- Stealing
- Leaving the school ground or classrooms without permission
- Climbing trees, roofs or structures other than designated playground equipment
- Violence-based games

### **5.2 BULLYING**

Bullying is when someone, or a group of people, who have more power at the time, deliberately and persistently upset or hurt another person on more than one occasion (Department of Education and Training, *Safe Schools are Effective Schools*). There are three broad categories of bullying:

- Direct Physical Bullying – which includes hitting, tripping, pushing or damaging property
- Direct Verbal Bullying – which includes verbal abuse such as name calling, insults, or prejudiced remarks
- Indirect Bullying – this form of bullying is the hardest to identify as it is often carried out without people's immediate knowledge. It is used to harm someone's reputation and/or cause humiliation. It can include any or all of the following:
  - Lying and spreading rumours
  - Playing jokes to humiliate and embarrass
  - Mimicking
  - Encouraging others to socially exclude someone
  - Cyber-bullying which involves the use of email, text messages, social networking, or other technologies

The following behaviours, although distressing and likely to require intervention, are not considered examples of bullying:

- Mutual conflict – In mutual conflict situations, there is an argument or disagreement between students, but not an imbalance of power
- Social rejection or dislike – this is only considered bullying if it is directed deliberately at one student on a number of occasions
- Single-episode acts – by definition a single event is not considered bullying

In addition to general consequences, Clifton Hill Primary School has developed specific anti-bullying guidelines. All teachers at Clifton Hill Primary School are committed to responding quickly to bullying situations to ensure that they do not continue or escalate. Playground supervision is thorough. All members of staff brief each other regarding potential and actual problems, responding swiftly. A series of graduated warnings/consequences is given to students in bullying situations:

- First incident: recorded by classroom teacher accompanied by a discussion with students involved. It is necessary for teachers to record all instances to identify emergent patterns and to retain copies of these records in students' files.
- Second incident: recorded by classroom teacher accompanied by a discussion with students involved.
- Third incident: referred to Section Leader and parents involved. Section Leader interviews student(s) involved in bullying incidents and any other relevant witnesses. A written report is made by Section Leader and placed in students' files. Remedial action is taken, and close monitoring of student(s) behaviour is maintained by classroom teacher and Section Leader
- If an incident is deemed serious enough because of its nature or past history or other relevant factors, teachers and/or Section Leaders may progress immediately to later stages
- Repeated incidents/ongoing issues: meeting with Principal, class teacher, student and parents. Action may include:
  - Student being placed on a behaviour contract
  - Student being referred to counselling
  - Student suspension procedures

### **5.3 Cyber-Safety**

Clifton Hill Primary School is concerned for the safety and wellbeing of all students and staff and has worked with students, parents and other professionals to develop a clear policy related to Cyber-Safety. This policy outlines consequences for unsafe or bullying behaviours and provides strategies for educating the school community about safe use of technologies.

### **5.4 Prevention**

Clifton Hill Primary School staff implement a range of early intervention strategies to support student engagement and to address individual barriers to learning. These prevention strategies:

- Define and teach school-wide and classroom expectations
- Establish school-wide and classroom consequences for problem behaviour
- Establish school-wide and classroom processes for early identification of students experiencing academic and/or behaviour difficulty
- Empower students by providing multiple opportunities for them to take responsibility and become involved in decision-making
- Provide a physical environment conducive to positive behaviours and effective engagement in learning
- Include the teaching of social skills

### **5.5 Intervention**

Clifton Hill Primary School utilises strategies including early interventions that:

- Are targeted, based on systemic collection and analysis of data and measure progress
- Teach and/or build positive social behaviours

- Predominantly involve the classroom teacher
- Address both academic and social strategies
- Involve partnerships with parents/carers

## **5.6 Student Support Group**

As an element in a staged response, Clifton Hill Primary School may utilise student support groups that:

- Identify the learning, social, emotional, behavioural and environmental needs of the child and the support or resources required for improvement
- Involve key specialist learning and wellbeing support staff
- Develop an Individual Learning Plan with the student's classroom teacher/s and ensure support to implement the plan
- Support referrals to community agencies for specialist interventions delivered in partnership with the student support group

## **5.7 Escalation of Student Behavioural Difficulties**

Clifton Hill Primary School staff members are able to involve the school's leadership during any stage of intervention regarding student behaviour. Guidelines to assist staff in this process are reviewed and updated regularly.

## **5.8 Suspension**

A student may, by order of the Principal of a state school, be suspended if, whilst attending school or travelling directly to or from school or engaged in any school activity away from the school, including travel organised by the school, the student does any of the following:

- a. Behaves in such a way as to constitute a danger to the health, safety or wellbeing of a person
- b. Commits an act of significant violence or causes significant damage or destruction to property, or is knowingly involved in the theft of property
- c. Processes, uses or deliberately assists others to use prohibited drugs or substances
- d. Fails to comply with any reasonable and clearly communicated instruction of a principal, teacher, support staff member or other adult
- e. Consistently behaves in a manner that interferes with the wellbeing, safety or educational opportunities of any other student or students
- f. Consistently engages in behaviour that vilifies, defames, degrades or humiliates another person (as outlined in the Student Engagement Policy Guidelines, p26)

If a student is suspended, it should be for the shortest time necessary. The period of suspension should be used by the school, the student and the student's parents/carers as an opportunity to reflect on the present difficulties and develop positive, student-focused engagement strategies. Appropriate and meaningful schoolwork must be provided to the suspended student. At any time during a suspension, parents/carers can request that a student support group meeting be convened.

### **5.8.1 In-school Suspensions**

An in-school suspension can have a number of positive outcomes for the school and the student:

- The suspended students and the rest of the class can continue work, with disruption minimised
- Time can be allocated for support for the individual student their parents/carers (if appropriate)

- It allows out-of-school suspension to be used for the most extreme behavioural issues.

## **5.9 Expulsion**

The School Principal has the authority to permanently exclude a student from his or her school according to the procedures set out below. Permanent expulsion from a school is the most extreme sanction open to a Principal. Except in the most unusual and extreme circumstances, it will only be used after other relevant forms of behaviour management outlined in the school's Student Engagement Policy have been exhausted.

The Principal can expel a student if, whilst attending school or directly travelling to or from school or engaged in any school activity away from the school, including travel organised by the school:

- The student does anything for which they could be suspended
- The student's behaviour is of such magnitude, that when comparing the student's educational needs with the need to maintain: the health, safety, and wellbeing of staff and students; and the effectiveness of the school's educational programs, an expulsion is the only available mechanism.

## **6.0 PROMOTING SCHOOL ATTENDANCE**

Whilst student attendance at school is a legal obligation of parents/carers, staff members at Clifton Hill Primary School community are committed to providing active support for full student attendance.

### **6.1 School approach**

Clifton Hill Primary School utilises the following whole-school strategies to promote school attendance:

- Setting and communicating high expectations for attendance to all members of the school community
- Adopting consistent, rigorous procedures to monitor and record student absences.
- Following up student absences promptly and consistently
- Creating safe, supportive learning environments where all students experience success through active participation and engagement in purposeful learning
- Providing early identification of and immediate supportive intervention for students at risk of non-attendance

### **6.2 Expectations for attendance – Parents**

Parents/carers are required to:

- Ensure that their child is on time for school each day
- Promote and provide organisational support to their child for full attendance and participation at school on all designated school days
- Notify the school of their child's absence as soon as possible on the first day of the child's absence
- Notify the school in advance if an absence of any period is planned
- Support their child's learning during continued or prolonged absences through the implementation of a Student Absence Learning Plan
- Work cooperatively and collaboratively with the school to develop and implement improvement strategies when attendance has been inconsistent due to reasons deemed unsatisfactory by the school
- Work cooperatively with the school in supporting the child to return to school after prolonged absence
- Ensure that all contact details are correct and up to date



### **6.3 Expectations for attendance – Students**

Students are expected to:

- Attend school at all times when the school is open for instruction
- Arrive on time to school and to every class
- Provide a written explanation from their parents/carers to their teachers when they have been absent from school
- Remain on the school premises during school time unless they have permission to leave from both the school and their parents/carers
- Work cooperatively with the school to develop personal attendance improvement goals and strategies when their attendance has been inconsistent

### **7.0 GUIDELINES**

This policy is based upon the following documents, programs and resources:

- *Effective Schools are Engaging Schools. Student Engagement Policy Guidelines. Promoting student engagement, attendance and positive behaviours in Victorian government schools* (Department of Education and Early Childhood Development)
- Victorian Essential Learning Standards
- Clifton Hill Primary School Strategic Plan
- You Can Do It! Education
- Habits of Mind
- Teacher reference materials

### **8.0 REVIEW**

This policy is part of the School's Accountability and Improvement Framework. It will be reviewed annually as a component of the strategic planning process. This will ensure school strategic and annual implementation plans continue to reflect changing approaches to student engagement, attendance and positive behaviour.