

FERNTREE GULLY NORTH PRIMARY SCHOOL STUDENT WELLBEING AND ENGAGEMENT POLICY



Help for non-English speakers

If you need help to understand this policy, please contact Ferntree Gully North Primary School.

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.

Ferntree Gully North PS 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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POLICY School profile

Ferntree Gully North PS is situated at the base of the Dandenong Ranges and has an enrolment of 295 in 2025, 142 female, 15 male, 3 percent of students had English as a second language and 1 percent were Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander. Our overall socio-economic profile based on the school's Student Family Occupation and Education index is in the medium range.

Our state of the art facilities continue to provide an outstanding learning environment for our students, teachers and the community. Our values are excellence, respect, resilience and integrity. The community prides itself on our beautiful environment and our vision is to provide a holistic approach to educating students encompassing academic, social and emotional growth. Our learning community is founded on an educational philosophy centred on the whole child and ground in the belief that all students can learn and all students have the right to be challenged to fulfil their potential as life-long learners. Our staff profile includes two Principal class, 25 teaching staff and 11 Education Support Personnel.

We offer a comprehensive education for our students including the specialist areas of visual arts, performing arts, science and physical education. Our language focus for years Foundation-6 is Auslan and a cultural program. We also include a cultural program for Year 5 and 6 students. The school has an Enviro Centre with a focus on chickens and some food production. Our instrumental and Dance Academy programs offer additional experiences for children.

Ferntree Gully North PS is proud of its reputation and proven history in catering for diverse needs within the community. Our disability inclusion program is supported by Education Support Personnel who assist students in the classroom, specialist lessons and whilst in the yard. These funded students are supported by Education Support Staff who assist them in class, specialist lessons and whilst outside in the yard. We offer literacy intervention programs and a school based speech pathology service. We also engage with other therapists such as an Occupational Therapist, and Play Based Therapist. Our staff also offer cycles of learning interventions as appropriate for pre-year 6

Ferntree Gully North PS provides a safe and supportive community of lifelong learning where respect, diversity and pride are valued by all. The school has links with the extended community through the Ferntree Gully Rotary Group and Glengollan Retirement Village. These links provide extra-curricular activities and leadership opportunities for students. We provide our student leaders with opportunities to be involved in school decision making within the school community. The school places high value on the expertise of our teachers and the role of parents as partners in learning across the curriculum.

Ferntree Gully North PS responds to the needs and expectations of parents and the community by providing educational programs that cater for a variety of learning styles, student needs and ambitions. The school sees parents as vital partners in the educational process and seeks their active participation, through various support bodies within the school including the sustainability and edible garden programs.

School values, philosophy and vision

Preventative School Culture

Ferntree Gully North PS 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 to provide 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 support Behaviour Educators, strong student led leadership and other targeted Social Skills Programs including our core values of respect, resilience, integrity and excellence and the use of the Department of Education Respectful Relationships program. In 2025 a Mental Health and Wellbeing position has been established with a 0.5 role within the school based on department protocols.

The Welfare Team comprising of the Principal, Assistant Principal and the Wellbeing Officer meet as the need arises to discuss students who may be at risk and what future direction we need to take to support the child.

The School Council and Leadership team regularly consult with students, parents/carers, support organisations and the broader community to ensure we are responsive to students' social, emotional, cognitive and cultural needs.

Our positive school culture has a solid foundation in the belief that student engagement is the basis for learning. To support this, the school improvement team and school leadership team is actively engaged in developing classroom practice 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. These are provided through our Welfare program, School based Speech Pathology program.

Wellbeing and Engagement Strategies

Ferntree Gully North Primary school has developed a range of strategies to promote engagement, an inclusive and safe environment, positive behaviour, and respectful relationships for all students in our school. We recognise the importance of student friendships and peer support in helping children and students feel safe and less isolated. 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.

A summary of the universal (whole of school), targeted (year group specific) and individual engagement strategies used by our school is included below:

- 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 and that embraces and celebrates diversity and empowers all students to participate and feel valued
- 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 Ferntree Gully North Primary School use an instructional 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 Ferntree Gully North Primary school adopt a broad range of teaching and assessment approaches to effectively respond to the diverse learning styles, strengths and needs of our students and follow the standards set by the Victorian Institute of Teaching
- our school's Statement of Values and School Philosophy 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. Students are also encouraged to speak with their teachers, Year Level Coordinator, Assistant Principal and Principal whenever they have any questions or concerns.
- create opportunities for cross—age connections amongst students through school events such as , athletics, music programs and peer support programs
- all students are welcome to self-refer to the Student Wellbeing Coordinator, Team Leaders, Assistant Principal 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

Bully Stoppers

Safe Schools where appropriate

- programs, incursions and excursions developed to address issue curriculum focus areas or specific needs.
- opportunities for student inclusion (i.e. sports teams, recess and lunchtime activities)
- buddy programs, peers support programs
- measures are in place to empower our school community to identify, report and address inappropriate and harmful behaviours such as racism, homophobia and other forms of discrimination or harassment.

Targeted

- each year group has a Team Leader, a senior teacher responsible for their level who monitor the health and wellbeing of students in their year, and act as a point of contact for students who may need additional support
- Koorie students are supported to engage fully in their education, in a positive learning environment that understands and appreciates the strength of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture – refer to our Aboriginal learning Plan, Wellbeing and Safety Action Plan / Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy for further information
- we provide a positive and respectful learning environment for our students who identify as LGBTIQ+ and follow the Department’s policy on [LGBTIQ Student Support](#)
- all students in Out of Home Care are supported in accordance with the Department’s policy on [Supporting Students in Out-of-Home Care](#) including being appointed a Learning Mentor (Assistant Principal/ Classroom teacher), having an Individual Learning Plan and a Student Support Group (SSG) and being referred to Student Support Services for an Educational Needs Assessment.
- students with a disability are supported to be able to engage fully in their learning and school activities in accordance with the Department’s policy on [Students with Disability](#), such as through reasonable adjustments to support access to learning programs, consultation with families and where required, student support groups and individual education plans
- Training and Development in response to needs identified by student wellbeing data, classroom teachers or other school staff each year will occur to support the development of teachers and whole staff.

Individual

Ferntree Gully North 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 Student Support Plan
- considering if any environmental changes need to be made, for example changing the classroom set up
- referring the student to:
 - o school-based wellbeing supports
 - o 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 ChildFirst

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
- engaging with our regional Koorie Engagement Support Officers
- running regular Student Support Group meetings for all students:
 - o with a disability
 - o in Out of Home Care
 - o with other complex needs that require ongoing support and monitoring.

1. Identifying students in need of support

Ferntree Gully North Primary School is committed to providing the necessary support to ensure our students are supported intellectually, emotionally and socially. The Student Wellbeing team plays a significant role in developing and implementing strategies help identify students in need of support and enhance student wellbeing. Ferntree Gully North 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 staff

2. Student rights and responsibilities

All members of our 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 responsibilities of members of our community.

Students have the right to:

- participate fully in their education
- feel safe, secure and happy at school
- learn in an environment free from bullying, harassment, violence, racism, discrimination or intimidation
- express their ideas, feelings and concerns.

Students have the responsibility to:

- participate fully in their educational program
- display positive behaviours that demonstrate respect for themselves, their peers, their teachers and members of the school community
- respect the right of others to learn.

Students who may have a complaint or concern about something that has happened at school are encouraged to speak to their parents or carers and approach a trusted teacher or a member of the school leadership team. Further information about raising a complaint or concern is available in our Complaints Policy.

3. Student behavioural expectations and management

Behavioural expectations of students are grounded in our school's Statement of Values.

Violence, bullying, and other offensive and harmful behaviours such as racism, harassment and discrimination will not be tolerated and will be managed in accordance with our Child Safety/ Child Safety code of Conduct policies. Bullying will be managed in accordance with our Bullying Prevention Policy.

When a student acts in breach of the behaviour standards of our school community, Ferntree Gully North Primary School will institute a staged response, consistent with the Department's policies on behaviour, discipline and student wellbeing and engagement. Where appropriate, parents will be informed about the inappropriate behaviour and the disciplinary action taken by teachers and other school staff.

Our school considers, explores and implements positive and non-punitive interventions to support student behaviour before considering disciplinary measures such as detention, withdrawal of privileges or withdrawal from class.

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
- referral to the Team Leader Coordinator
- restorative practices through our PITW approach
- behaviour support and intervention meetings with parents/carers/guardians and support services as needed
- suspension in school / home
- expulsion in accordance to DET Policies

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

- <https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/suspensions/policy>
- <https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/expulsions/policy>
- <https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/restraint-seclusion/policy>

In line with Ministerial Order 1125, no student aged 8 or younger will be expelled without the approval of the Secretary of the Department of Education.

Ferntree Gully North Primary School is responsible for ensuring all suspensions and expulsions are recorded on CASES21.

Corporal punishment is prohibited by law and will not be used in any circumstance at our school.

4. Engaging with families

Ferntree Gully North 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 that all parents have access to our school policies and procedures, available on our school website
- providing parent volunteer opportunities so that families can contribute to school activities
- involving families with other curriculum-related activities and school events
- coordinating resources and services from the community for families
- including families in Student Support Groups, and developing individual plans for students.

5. Evaluation

Ferntree Gully North Primary School will collect data each year to understand the frequency and types of wellbeing 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:

- student survey data including ATOSS (Attitudes to School Survey years 4-6)
- incidents data
- school reports
- parent survey
- case management
- CASES21, including attendance and absence data

- SOCS – student support services

Ferntree Gully North Primary School will also regularly monitor available data dashboards to ensure any wellbeing or engagement issues are acted upon in a timely manner and any intervention occurs as soon as possible.

COMMUNICATION

This policy will be communicated to our school community in the following ways:

- Available publicly on our school's website
- Included in staff induction processes
- Made available in hard copy from school administration upon request

Our school will also ensure it follows the mandatory parent/carer notification requirements with respect to suspensions and expulsions outlined in the Department's policies at:

- [Suspension process](#)
- [Expulsions - Decision](#)

Further information and resources

The following Department of Education and Training policies are relevant to this Student Engagement and Wellbeing Policy:

- [Attendance](#)
- [Student Engagement](#)
- [Child Safe Standards](#)
- [Supporting Students in Out-of-Home Care](#)
- [Students with Disability](#)
- [LGBTIQ Student Support](#)
- [Behaviour - Students](#)
- [Suspensions](#)
- [Expulsions](#)
- [Restraint and Seclusion](#)

The following school policies are also relevant to this Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy:

- Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy
- Bullying Prevention Policy
- Inclusion and Diversity Policy
- Statement of Values and School Philosophy

POLICY REVIEW AND APPROVAL

Policy last reviewed	May 2025
Consultation	May 2025 School Council Consultation.
Approved by	Principal
Next scheduled review date	May 2027