Tarnagulla Primary School

**STUDENT WELLBEING AND   
ENGAGEMENT POLICY**

**Purpose**

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that all students and members of our school community understand:

1. our commitment to providing a safe and supportive learning environment for students
2. expectations for positive student behaviour
3. support available to students and families
4. our school’s policies and procedures for responding to inappropriate student behaviour.

Tarnagulla Primary School is committed to providing a safe, secure and stimulating learning environment for all students. We understand that students reach their full potential only when they are happy, healthy and safe, and that a positive school culture helps to engage students and support them in their learning. Our school acknowledges that student wellbeing and student learning outcomes are closely linked.

The objective of this policy is to support our school to create and maintain a safe, supportive and inclusive school environment consistent with our school’s values.

**Scope**

This policy applies to all school activities, including camps and excursions.

**Contents**

1. School profile
2. School values, philosophy and vision
3. Engagement strategies
4. Identifying students in need of support
5. Student rights and responsibilities
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**Policy**

1. **School profile**

Tarnagulla Primary School was established in 1873 and is located approximately 47 kilometres west of Bendigo. We have 30 students (2021) enrolled from Grade Foundation to 6, and 7 school staff members including part-time staff: literacy support specialist, business manager and Tutor Learning Support teacher.

Our school grounds back onto native bushland, and we are surrounded by a supportive community. All students that attend our school live locally with most catching one of the two buses for transport. Those that live within the township tend to walk, scoot or ride their bike to school. Tarnagulla Primary School has developed close ties to the local community and enjoys support from our local shops and community services.

Our school is not particularly culturally diverse and so we make strong efforts to educate and promote respect for cultural and ethnic diversity to help build an inclusive school community.

We strive to provide a nurturing and challenging environment that empowers students to reach their personal best, both academically and socially.

1. **School values, philosophy and vision**

Tarnagulla Primary School’s Statement of Values and School Philosophy is integral to the work that we do and is the foundation of our school community. Students, staff and members of our school community are encouraged to live and demonstrate our core values of safety, respect and striving for personal excellence at every opportunity.

Our school’s vision is to empower students to reach their personal best, and fully equip them to contribute positively to society as happy, healthy young adults.

Our Statement of Values is available online at: <http://tarnps.vic.edu.au>

1. **Engagement strategies**

Tarnagulla Primary School has developed a range of strategies to promote engagement, positive behaviour and respectful relationships for all students in our school. We acknowledge that some students may need extra social, emotional or educational support at school, and that the needs of students will change over time as they grow and learn.

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

*Universal*

* high and consistent expectations of all staff, students and parents and carers
* prioritise positive relationships between staff and students, recognising the fundamental role this plays in building and sustaining student wellbeing
* creating a culture that is inclusive, engaging and supportive
* welcoming all parents/carers and being responsive to them as partners in learning
* analysing and being responsive to a range of school data such as attendance, Attitudes to School Survey, parent survey data and student management data
* deliver a broad curriculum including extra-curricular activities (many with partner cluster schools) to ensure that students are able to benefit from engaging with a wider learning community
* teachers at Tarnagulla 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 Tarnagulla 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 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. Students are also encouraged to speak with their teachers, and Principal whenever they have any questions or concerns.
* foster and support cross-age connections amongst students in the classroom, during sporting activities and at play
* all students are welcome to self-refer to the 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 and
  + Safe Schools
* opportunities for student inclusion (i.e., sports teams, clubs, recess and lunchtime activities)
* buddy programs, peers support programs

*Targeted*

* all students in Out of Home Care will be appointed a Learning Mentor, have an Individual Learning Plan with educational needs addressed as a priority
* staff will undertake health promotion and social skills development in response to needs identified by student wellbeing data, classroom teachers or other school staff each year
* staff will apply a trauma-informed approach to working with students who have experienced trauma

*Individual*

* Individual Learning Plan and Behaviour Support Plan
* Program for Students with Disabilities
* referral to ChildFirst, Headspace

Tarnagulla Primary School implements a range of strategies that support and promote individual engagement. These can include:

* building constructive relationships with students at risk or students who are vulnerable due to complex individual circumstances
* meeting with student and their parent/carer to talk about how best to help the student engage with school
* developing an Individual Learning Plan and/or a Behaviour Support Plan
* considering if any environmental changes need to be made, for example changing the classroom set up
* referring the student to:
  + school-based wellbeing supports
  + Student Support Services
  + Appropriate external supports such as council-based youth and family services, other allied health professionals, headspace, child and adolescent mental health services or 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
* running regular Student Support Group meetings for all students:
  + with a disability
  + in Out of Home Care
  + and with other complex needs that require ongoing support and monitoring.

1. **Identifying students in need of support**

Tarnagulla Primary School is committed to providing the necessary support to ensure our students are supported intellectually, emotionally and socially. The staff play a significant role in developing and implementing strategies help identify students in need of support and enhance student wellbeing. Tarnagulla 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 peers

1. **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, 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 the principal.

1. **Student behavioural expectations**

Behavioural expectations of students, staff and families are grounded in our school’s Statement of Values. Student bullying behaviour will be responded to consistently with Example School’s Bullying policy.

When a student acts in breach of the behaviour standards of our school community, Tarnagulla Primary School will institute a staged response, consistent with the Department’s Student Engagement and Inclusion Guidelines. Where appropriate, parents will be informed about the inappropriate behaviour and the disciplinary action taken by teachers and other school staff.

Disciplinary measures may be used as part of a staged response to inappropriate behaviour in combination with other engagement and support strategies to ensure that factors that may have contributed to the student’s behaviour are identified and addressed. Disciplinary measures at our school will be applied fairly and consistently. Students will always be provided with an opportunity to be heard.

Disciplinary measures that may be applied include:

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

Suspension and expulsion are measures of last resort and may only be used in particular situations consistent with Department policy, available at: <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/participation/pages/engagement.aspx>

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

The school commits to adhering to the Department policies referring to physical restraint and seclusion. These policies are available here: [Restraint and Seclusion: Policy | education.vic.gov.au](https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/restraint-seclusion/policy)

1. **Engaging with families**

Tarnagulla 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
* maintaining an open, respectful line of communication between parents and staff
* providing parent volunteer opportunities so that families can contribute to school activities
* involving families with homework and other curriculum-related activities
* involving families in school decision making
* coordinating resources and services from the community for families
* including families in Student Support Groups and developing individual plans for students.

1. **Evaluation**

Tarnagulla 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
* incidents data
* school reports
* parent survey
* case management
* CASES21
* SOCS

**Further information and resources**

Other related policies available on the school website include:

* Philosophy Statement
* Child Safe Policy

**Review cycle**

This policy was last updated in September 2021 and is scheduled for review in September 2024.

What is physical restraint?

Physical restraint is the use of physical force to prevent, restrict or subdue the movement of a student’s body or part of their body. Students are not free to move away when they are being physically restrained.

Physical restraint does not include protective physical interventions which use physical contact to block, deflect or redirect a student's actions, or disengage a student's grip, but from which a student can move freely away.

What is seclusion?

Seclusion refers to leaving a student alone in a room or area from which they are prevented from leaving by a barrier or another person. This includes situations where a door is locked as well as where the door is blocked by other objects or held closed by another person.

Seclusion does not include supervised situations such as time-out, in-school suspensions, detentions, or exam situations; other situations where the student can freely exit an area, or suspension and expulsion from school.