

# STUDENT WELLBEING AND ENGAGEMENT POLICY

## PURPOSE

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

- (a) our commitment to providing a safe and supportive learning environment for students
- (b) expectations for positive student behaviour
- (c) support available to students and families
- (d) our school's policies and procedures for responding to inappropriate student behaviour.

Furlong Park School for Deaf Children 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

### 1. School profile

Furlong Park School for Deaf Children is situated in the outer suburb of Sunshine North and is a well-equipped purpose built facility for Deaf children aged 3+ to the end of Year 6. The school provides bi-lingual (English/Auslan) educational programs for deaf children from the Northern and Western Regions of Melbourne. Furlong Park have teachers who are qualified Teachers of the Deaf or are working towards this certification, Educational Support Staff and a leadership team which consists of one Assistant Principal and one Principal.

Enrolment is based on DET eligibility requirements of a 40dB (minimum) permanent bilateral sensorineural hearing loss. Enrolments for 2019 are approximately 49 in the school program (Prep to Year 6) and 24 in our Early Learning Centre (3 and 4 year olds). These numbers have remained stable over previous years. Each child has an Individual Learning Plan consisting of goals devised in partnership between families, teachers, therapists and is negotiated at School Support Group meetings.

The Early Learning Centre and school is aligned to the Victorian Early Years Learning and Developmental Framework and the Victorian Curriculum. In F-6 the school reports on student achievement in English, Maths, Personal and Social Capabilities, Science, Auslan, Critical and Creative Thinking, Ethical and Intercultural Capabilities as well as speech. The school also reports on specialist subjects of Physical Education, Visual Arts and ICT.

Approximately 40% of students from a language background other than English. Many students use Auslan as their primary language, however this language is not always used or known by their families. Student absence rates are an ongoing challenge which we are striving to improve. Most children travel to school via the school bus which means that parents have very little contact with the school.

## 2. School values, philosophy and vision

Furlong Park School for Deaf Children'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 caring for others, being a good learner, being safe and being responsible.

Our school's vision is to Empower – Enrich – Educate.

Our Statement of Values is available on our website.

## 3. Engagement strategies

Furlong Park School for Deaf Children 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 (year group specific) 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
- offering free Auslan classes to parents to assist their communication with their child
- 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 Furlong Park School for Deaf Children 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, particularly from our 4 year old program to prep and Year 6 to secondary school
- 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
- all students are welcome to self-refer to the 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
- programs, incursions and excursions developed to address issue specific behaviour

#### Targeted

- staff will apply a trauma-informed approach to working with students who have experienced trauma

#### Individual

- Student Support Groups, see: <https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/student-support-groups/policy> , meet twice per year for each child
- Individual Learning Plan for every child are in place and Behaviour Support Plan for individual children
- Program for Students with Disabilities
- referral to Student Support Services
- referral to ChildFirst
- Lookout

Furlong Park School for Deaf Children 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:
  - Student Support Services
  - Appropriate external supports such as council based youth and family services, other allied health professionals, child and adolescent mental health services or ChildFirst

Where necessary the school will support the student's family to engage by:

- providing weekly Auslan classes to assist parents and families with communication
- 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

#### 4. Identifying students in need of support

Furlong Park School for Deaf Children is committed to providing the necessary support to ensure our students are supported intellectually, emotionally and socially. The Student Wellbeing officer plays a significant role in developing and implementing strategies to help identify students in need of support and enhance student wellbeing. Furlong Park School for Deaf Children 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

#### 5. 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 a member of the school leadership team.

## 6. 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 Furlong Park School for Deaf Children's *Bullying policy*.

When a student acts in breach of the behaviour standards of our school community, Furlong Park School for Deaf Children 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 Leadership Team
- 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.

## 7. Engaging with families

Furlong Park School for Deaf Children 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:

- providing free weekly Auslan classes
- ensuring that all parents have access to our school policies and procedures, available on our school website
- maintaining an open, respectful line of communication between parents and staff, supported by our Communicating with School Staff policy
- providing parent volunteer opportunities so that families can contribute to school activities eg. gardening support, running Mother/Father's day stalls
- involving families with homework and other curriculum-related activities
- involving families in school decision making
- coordinating resources and services from the community for families, eg. NDIS sessions, Deaf Children Australia publications regarding school holiday programs.
- including families in Student Support Groups, and developing individual plans for students.

## 8. Engaging with NDIS

Parents may request external therapists to attend the school to provide therapy to students and/or meet with classroom teachers. The requests are made via the Principal. The Principal follows the guidelines provided by DET (Responding to requests for NDIS therapy in schools).

## 9. Evaluation

Furlong Park School for Deaf Children 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

*Statement of Values and School Philosophy, Bullying Prevention, Child Safe Standards*

## REVIEW CYCLE

This policy was last updated on 25 October 2019 and is scheduled for review in October 2021.