



STUDENT WELLBEING & ENGAGEMENT POLICY



Help for non-English speakers

If you need help to understand the information in this policy, please contact Armstrong Creek School on 03 5218 5100 or armstrong.creek.school@education.vic.gov.au

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.

Armstrong Creek 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, where student participation is encouraged and valued, 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. Wellbeing and engagement Strategies
4. Strategies to Promote Child Empowerment and Participation
5. Identifying students in needs of extra support
6. Student behavioural expectations and management
7. School Actions
8. Engaging with families
9. Evaluation

POLICY

1. SCHOOL PROFILE:

Armstrong Creek School is a PPP (Public/Private Partnerships) school that opened at the beginning of the 2018 school year. It is situated in the large urban growth area of Armstrong Creek, to the south-east of Geelong and approximately 12 km from the Geelong city centre. The school was anticipated to grow significantly within the first 2-3 years due to being the first school built in this growth corridor area. The school has been designed to create contemporary learning environments that facilitate learning and a learner centred approach. The school curriculum is based on the Victorian Curriculum.

Armstrong Creek School provides new facilities, combining both primary (P-6) and specialist (P-12) school elements under a one governance model. Features of the school include:

- Learning communities that provide an environment that encourages students to engage with and take ownership of their learning including informal and quiet reflection, hands on learning, centralised presentation space, formal or direct instruction and outdoor learning spaces.
- An expanded two court stadium, built to netball Victoria competition standards.
- A large multi-purpose space for use by the school during the day and used by the YMCA after hours to deliver Out of School Hours Care and other community programs.
- Outdoor hard courts and sporting fields.
- Additional conference and meeting spaces for local community use.

Armstrong Creek School is an exciting social infrastructure hub for the growing community. The school presents an exciting opportunity for the School Leadership Team and teaching staff to exercise a significant influence on the creation of a contemporary school connected to the community and the future effectiveness of learning outcomes of the students. The overarching drivers in our curriculum are personalising learning and increasingly building each child's capacity to direct, influence and take responsibility for their own learning.

2. SCHOOL VALUES, PHILOSOPHY AND VISION

Armstrong Creek 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 care, collaboration and commitment at every opportunity.

Our school's vision is to empower students to be confident and curious learners, and fully equip them to contribute positively to society as happy, healthy young adults.

Armstrong Creek School is committed to providing a safe, secure and stimulating learning environment for all students. Students can reach their full educational potential when they are happy, healthy and safe, and when there is a positive school culture to engage and support them in their learning. Armstrong Creek School acknowledges that student wellbeing and student learning outcomes are inextricably linked.

OUR PHILOSOPHY:

Every member of the school community has a right to fully participate in an educational environment that is safe, supportive and inclusive.

OUR VISION:

All students are confident, curious learners who feel supported and able to meet the challenges at school and beyond.

OUR VALUES:

Armstrong Creek School's values are:

- Care: At ACS we show care for one another, our school and property through our words and behaviours.
- Collaboration: At ACS we collaborate across all areas of the school, from the classroom setting to the PACC (Parents and Community Club).
- Commitment: At ACS we aim to do our best to achieve individual excellence.

3. WELLBEING AND ENGAGEMENT STRATEGIES

Armstrong Creek 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, as a group or as individuals, may need extra social, emotional or educational support to flourish at school, and so we will put in place strategies to identify these students and provide them with the support they need.

Armstrong Creek School works collaboratively with students and parents/carers to establish fair and respectful behaviour policies and practices, based on the school's values, expected social competencies and positive peer relationships. There are also intervention strategies in place to address inappropriate behaviours which can negatively impact on the learning environment of the self and others.

4. STRATEGIES TO PROMOTE CHILD EMPOWERMENT AND PARTICIPATION

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 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
- supporting families to engage in their child's learning and builds their capacity as active learners
- collaboratively develop and implement a fair and respectful whole-school engagement and behaviour management approach
- whole school curriculum that includes pro-social values and behaviour to enable students to acquire knowledge and skills, value diversity and build a culture of learning, community and engagement
- active student participation that provides students with a sense of ownership of their environment
- promotion and encouragement of active student participation as an avenue for improving student outcomes, facilitating school change
- establishes social/emotional and educational support for vulnerable students and monitors and evaluates progress
- processes in place to identify and respond to individual students who require additional assistance and support.
- builds strong links with the local community to gain access to an extended network of community members, professionals and educators who can provide expertise and experience that can build the capacity of our school and our teachers to respond to the needs of the students.
- analysing and being responsive to a range of school data such as school level assessment data learning growth, attendance, Attitudes to School Survey and parent survey data,
- teachers and education support staff utilise the Armstrong Creek School Instructional model and Co-Teaching model 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 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
- develop behavioural expectations for all members of the school community in consultation with students, staff and parents/carers, and these will be taught to all students and shared with their families.
- positive behaviour and student achievement is acknowledged in the classroom, and formally in school assemblies and via communication to parents (Compass / Seesaw)

- monitor student attendance and implement attendance improvement strategies at a whole-school, cohort and individual level Armstrong Creek School
- 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 level assemblies and home group circle times. Students are also encouraged to speak with their teachers, Leading Teacher, Assistant Principal and Principal whenever they have any questions or concerns.
- create opportunities for cross—age connections amongst students through school sporting events such as athletics, cross country and swimming carnivals, music programs and lunchtime student voice clubs
- we engage in school wide positive behaviour support with our staff and students, which includes programs such as:
 - School Wide Positive Behaviour Support (SWPBS)
 - Respectful Relationships
 - Berry Street Education Model
- programs, incursions and excursions developed to address issue specific needs or behaviour (i.e. such as Zone of Regulation programs)
- opportunities for student inclusion (i.e. sports teams, clubs, recess and lunchtime activities) • buddy programs, peers support programs, student voice clubs, indoor clubs.
- 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 Leading Teacher, a teacher responsible for their year, 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
- all home group teachers are responsible for the wellbeing and health of students in their home group and undertake health promotion and social skills development in response to needs identified by student wellbeing data
- 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
- our English as a second language students and cultural and linguistically diverse students are supported to feel safe and included in our school. They are supported through our Tiered approach to teaching and learning
- we support learning and wellbeing outcomes of students from refugee background
- 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 having an Individual Education 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
- students enrolled under the Department's international student program are supported in accordance with our legal obligations and Department policy and guidelines at: [International Student Program](#)

- all students from Year 10 and above will be assisted to develop a Career Action Plan, with targeted goals and support to plan for their future

Individual

Armstrong Creek 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, sensory tools, individual resources
- Seek extra resources under the Program for Students with Disabilities / Diversity Inclusion Profile for eligible students
- referring the students to:
 - school-based referral processes (academic and wellbeing) supports
 - Student Support Services (SSS)
 - Appropriate external supports such as council-based youth and family services, other allied health professionals, headspace, child and adolescent mental health services or The Orange Door
 - Re-engagement programs such as Navigator, Barwon Bridge (age appropriate) 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 (care team meetings)
- monitoring individual student attendance and developing an Attendance Improvement Plan in collaboration with the student and their family
- running regular Student Support Group meetings for: - Students supported under the Program for Students with Disabilities (PSD) or who have a Disability Inclusion Profile (DIP) - Students in statutory Out-of-home care (OOHC) - Koorie students (in accordance with the Marrung Aboriginal Education Plan 2016 – 2026 strategy).

Useful links and further information about Department's Policies and Procedures can be found here:

- [Student Support Groups](#)
- [Individual Education Plans](#)
- [Behaviour - Students](#)
- [Behaviour Support Plans](#)
- [Student Support Services](#)

as well as to other Department programs and services such as:

- [Program for Students with Disabilities](#)
- [Mental health toolkit](#)
- [headspace](#)
- [Navigator](#)
- [LOOKOUT](#)

5. IDENTIFYING STUDENTS IN NEED OF EXTRA SUPPORT

Armstrong Creek School is committed to providing the necessary support to ensure our students are supported intellectually, emotionally and socially. The Positive Climate for Learning team and the Leadership Team plays a significant role in developing and implementing strategies to help identify students in need of support and enhance student wellbeing. Armstrong Creek 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 and learning growth
- observations by school staff such as changes in engagement, behaviour, self-care, social connectedness and motivation
- attendance, behaviour and suspension data
- engagement with families

6. 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.

7. STUDENT BEHAVIOURAL EXPECTATIONS AND MANAGEMENT

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 Bullying Prevention Policy.

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 this policy. 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, Armstrong Creek 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.

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. Processes to manage challenging behaviours are located in the SWPBS Handbook which may be accessed in each Learning Community as well as on the school's website.

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:

- informing a student that their behaviour is inappropriate
- teacher controlled consequences such as moving a student in a learning space or other reasonable and proportionate responses to misbehaviour
- withdrawal of privileges
- referral to the Leading Teacher
- SSG meeting
- update of Behaviour Support Plan
- restorative practices
- suspension (case by case basis)
- expulsion

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 and Training.

The Principal of Armstrong Creek 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.

8. ENGAGING WITH FAMILIES

Armstrong Creek 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 in school decision making
- coordinating resources and services from the community for families

- including families in Student Support Groups
- involving parents with the development of Individual Learning Plans
- involve parents with the development of Transition Plans
- involve parents with the development of Positive Behaviour Support Plans

9. EVALUATION

Armstrong Creek School will collect data each year to understand the frequency and types of 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:

- Attitudes to School Survey data
- Incidents data on Compass
- Parent Opinion Survey
- CASES 21 including attendance and absence data
- School level data / reports (curriculum)
- SOCS

COMMUNICATION

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

- Available publicly on our school's website and via Compass
- Included in staff induction processes and/or annual training / professional learning
- Reminders in our school newsletter
- Hard copy available 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 Policy
- Bullying Prevention Policy
- Inclusion and Diversity Policy
- Statement of Values and School Philosophy

POLICY REVIEW AND APPROVAL

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| Policy last reviewed | December 2024 |
| Consultation | School Community & School Council |
| Approved by | Principal |
| Next scheduled review date | December 2026 |