



Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy 2025-2027



Help for non-English speakers

If you need help to understand the information in this policy, please contact Big Hill Primary School 54477022 or email big.hill.ps@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.

Big Hill 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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1. School Profile
2. School Values, philosophy and vision
3. Wellbeing and Engagement strategies
4. Identifying students in need of support
5. Rights and responsibilities
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POLICY

1. School Profile

Big Hill PS is situated on the Calder Highway on the southern fringe of Bendigo. The school has attractive and spacious surrounds (including an adjoining flora and fauna reserve) and purpose-built play areas: synthetic sports field, a variety of undercover areas, junior playground (Foundation and Year 1 only), a large adventure playground and also a rope climbing spire.

Big Hill PS enjoys working with a large number of Koorie families, cultural backgrounds (e.g. Karen and Asian) and diverse family structure – all of whom add to a very supportive and inclusive culture at the school. Our SFOE is currently 0.4508, dropping just slightly in the last twelve months.



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As our SFOE is low-mid, we have a real mix of families with different socio-economic backgrounds, including a growing number of students funded as “disadvantaged” and attracting equity funding as a result. In the last 3 years, the school has continued to attract students funded under the Program for Students with Disabilities (PSD) as well as substantial students who have not attracted funding, but have challenging behaviours as a result of learning disorders. As a result of this change, staff have continued to undertake training to ensure classroom and school programs are inclusive. In addition to this, the school has also had to fund additional staff to ensure children were included, but the school remained safe.

Our community really is the school. Big Hill, whilst being a suburb of Bendigo, does not have a general store, post office, sporting club, community hall etc. In addition to this, the school draws from a large area, with several families travelling up to school from Ravenswood (10km to the South), rural areas of Big Hill (eg: Belvoir Park Road), from multiple housing developments in Big Hill and Kangaroo Flat South and from across Bendigo, though this is gradually dropping off now due to the FIND MY SCHOOL zoning across Greater Bendigo. Due to the nature of our geographical area outlined, the school is the hub of the community, so engaging families with detailed newsletters, Compass, active Facebook Pages (school and Parents and Friends), community events, weekly assemblies, with award presentations are important community events. We believe we do this well, but strive to continually improve and build stronger links.

Big Hill PS is also a SCHOOL WIDE POSITIVE BEHAVIOUR SUPPORT (SWPBS) school, with Tier 1 now embedded in our community and multiple elements of Tier 2 in place also. Our Values are well-known and referred to daily, whilst all children, staff and parents are aware of our behavioural expectations – positively stated in our Expectations Matrix. Positive behaviour is rewarded with Big Rewards, whilst inappropriate behaviour is managed with our Behaviour Management Flow Chart. This, generally, ensures support for our management of behaviours and is supported by our children rating our management of bullying favourably. We also introduced THE RESILIENCE PROJECT in 2020 and have all students accessing the resources provided from this great Wellbeing program.

2. School Values, philosophy and vision

Our school’s vision is: TOGETHER WE SUPPORT A COLLABORATIVE LEARNING COMMUNITY THAT ENCOURAGES HONESTY, LEADERSHIP, TEAMWORK, CREATIVITY AND KINDNESS. As part of our school culture, all students work within our 3 core school Values: Respect, Responsible and Safe. At Big Hill PS, we want not only academically skilled individuals, but well-balanced, resilient and social students ready for any challenge life presents them.

Big Hill 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 respect, responsibility and safety at every opportunity.

VALUE	MEANING	BEHAVIOURS What does it look like?
RESPECT	Respect means... Listening to and accepting the views and actions of others.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Looking after things, - Being nice to others, - Looking after ourselves, - Accepting differences in others, - Being friendly and positive to others, - Being honest to yourself and to others.
RESPONSIBLE	Responsibility means... Staying in control of your behaviour and actions. Being the best that you can be.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Taking care of belongings, - Taking care of our environment, - Behaving well, - Completing tasks without being asked – eg: change reader, finish work on time, - Completing all tasks to the best of our ability, - Do the right thing, - Including others in play, - Sharing with others.
SAFE	Safe means... Looking after ourselves and others.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Looking after others, - Being positive and staying healthy.

3. Wellbeing and Engagement strategies

Big Hill PS 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:

Universal

- high and consistent expectations of all staff, students, and parents / 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



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- teachers at Big Hill PS use The High Impact Teaching Strategies (10 instructional practices that reliably increase student learning wherever they are applied) 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 Big Hill PS 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 (SRC). Students are also encouraged to speak with their teachers and Principal whenever they have any questions or concerns
- create opportunities for cross-age connections amongst students through buddies, school plays, athletics and music programs
- all students are welcome to self-refer to the Student Wellbeing Coordinator, School Nurse, School Chaplain, Year Group 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 SWPBS with our staff and students, which includes programs such as Respectful Relationships, Safe Schools, The Resilience Project and Life Skills
- programs, incursions and excursions developed to address issue specific behaviour (ie: bullying)
- Buddy program

Targeted

- 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. We connect all Koorie students with a Koorie Engagement Support Officer.
- Our English as a second language students are supported through our EAL program, and all cultural and linguistically diverse students are supported to feel safe and included in our school
- 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](#)



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- 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, 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
- Wellbeing and health 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
- 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](#)

Individual

- Student Support Groups
- Individual Learning Plan and Behaviour Support Plan
- Disability Inclusion Tier 2 and 3
- referral to Student Welfare Coordinator, Chaplain and Student Support Services
- referral to Child FIRST, headspace
- LOOKOUT.

Big Hill PS 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 the 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 setup
- 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 Child FIRST.

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



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- 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.

4. Identifying students in need of support

Big Hill PS 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 that help identify students in need of support and enhance student wellbeing. Big Hill PS 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
- Wellbeing referrals

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.



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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.

6. 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 Big Hill Primary School's Bullying policy.

When a student acts in breach of the behaviour standards of our school community, Big Hill 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 Year Level Coordinator,
- restorative practices,
- detentions,
- behaviour support and intervention meetings,
- suspension,
- 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>



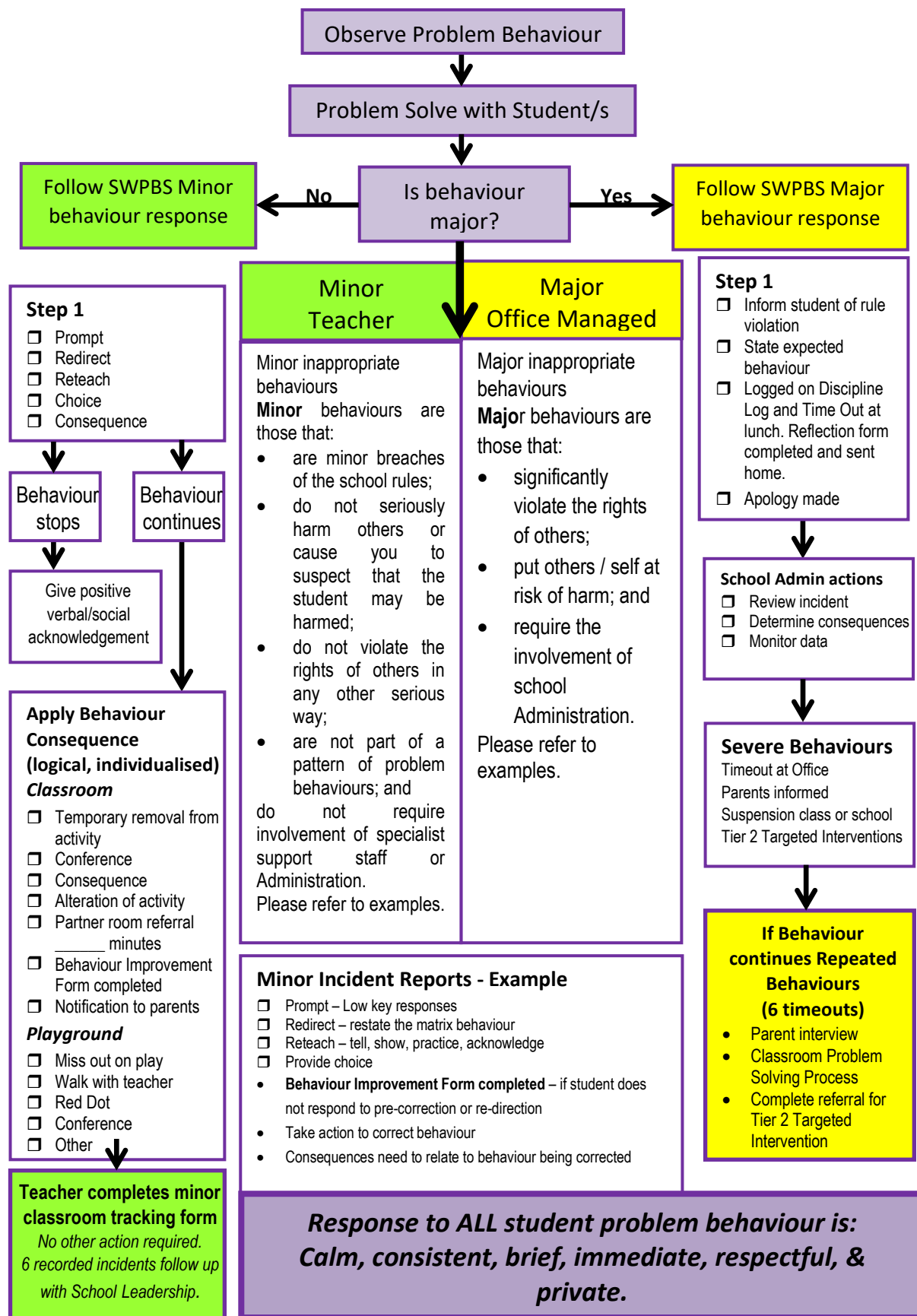
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In line with Ministerial Order 1125, no student aged 8 or younger will be expelled without the approval of the Secretary of the Department of Education and Training.

The Principal of Big Hill PS is responsible for ensuring all suspensions and expulsions are recorded on CASES21.

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

BHPS Behaviour Management Flowchart





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7. Engaging with Families

Big Hill PS 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, supported by our communicating with School Staff Policy,
- 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.

8. Evaluation

Big Hill PS 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,
- Compass including attendance and absences data,
- SOCS.

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,
- Included as annual reference in school newsletter,
- Made available in hard copy from school administration upon request.



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- Shared through COMPASS
- Available through enrolment processes

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 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](#)
- [LGBTIQA+ 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	December 2025
Consultation	School Council December 2025
Approved by	Principal
Next scheduled review date	December 2027