



Student Engagement and Wellbeing Policy 2023

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.

CONTENTS

1. School Profile
2. School Values, philosophy and vision
3. Wellbeing and engagement strategies
4. Identifying students in need of support
5. Student rights and responsibilities
6. Student behavioural expectations and management
7. Engaging with families
8. Evaluation

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 (Prep 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. 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



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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 the nature of our geographical area outlined, the school is the hub of the community, so engaging families with detailed newsletters, 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. Sadly, the last two years were a little different though - with COVID-19 creating history with State-wide lockdowns due to the pandemic...old ways of connecting face to face were not possible so other forms of communication became more important than previously...particularly those embedded in the digital world. The use of Facebook, our Website, DoJo, Showbie, Webex, FaceTime and phone calls became the norm. To connect, staff, students and families had to use any digital form available to keep learning as rich as possible.

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: Be Respectful, Be Responsible and Be 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.

We continued to have a relentless focus on Mathematics and English. In addition to Mathematics and English, our focus on learning Chinese, exploring The Arts (Music and Visual) and the importance of Physical Education were delivered weekly. Big Hill PS is proud of its rich Arts program, so having delivered music and visual art remotely and successfully was a real highlight of the year... in addition to the excellent Literacy and Numeracy delivered in the face of trying times.

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 (no data for 2020, however Parents rated high). We also introduced THE RESILIENCE PROJECT in 2020 and have all students accessing the resources provided from this great wellbeing program.



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Big Hill PS supports and promotes the principles and practice of Australian Democracy:

- Elected government
- The rule of law
- Equal rights for all before the law
- Freedom of religion; and
- Freedom of speech and association
- The values of openness and tolerance

2. School Values, philosophy and vision

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.

Our Statement of Values is available online at: [Big Hill Primary School \(bighillps.vic.edu.au\)](http://bighillps.vic.edu.au)

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 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 Big Hill PS use The High Impact Teaching Strategies (10 instructional practices that reliably increase student learning wherever they are applied) and Gradual Release of Responsibility 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 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,



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- 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 Voice (Student Representative Council) and Unit and class meetings. Students are also encouraged to speak with their teachers, Assistant Principal 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,
- 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),
- opportunities for student inclusion (ie: sports teams, clubs 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

- 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 – connect all Koorie students with a Koorie Engagement Support Officer,
- All cultural and linguistically diverse students are supported to feel safe and included in our school,
- 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, 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.



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Individual

- [Student Support Groups](#)
- [Individual Education Plans](#)
- [Program for Students with Disabilities](#)
- [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 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,
- 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:
 - 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:



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- 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.

5. 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. 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. 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 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.



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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:

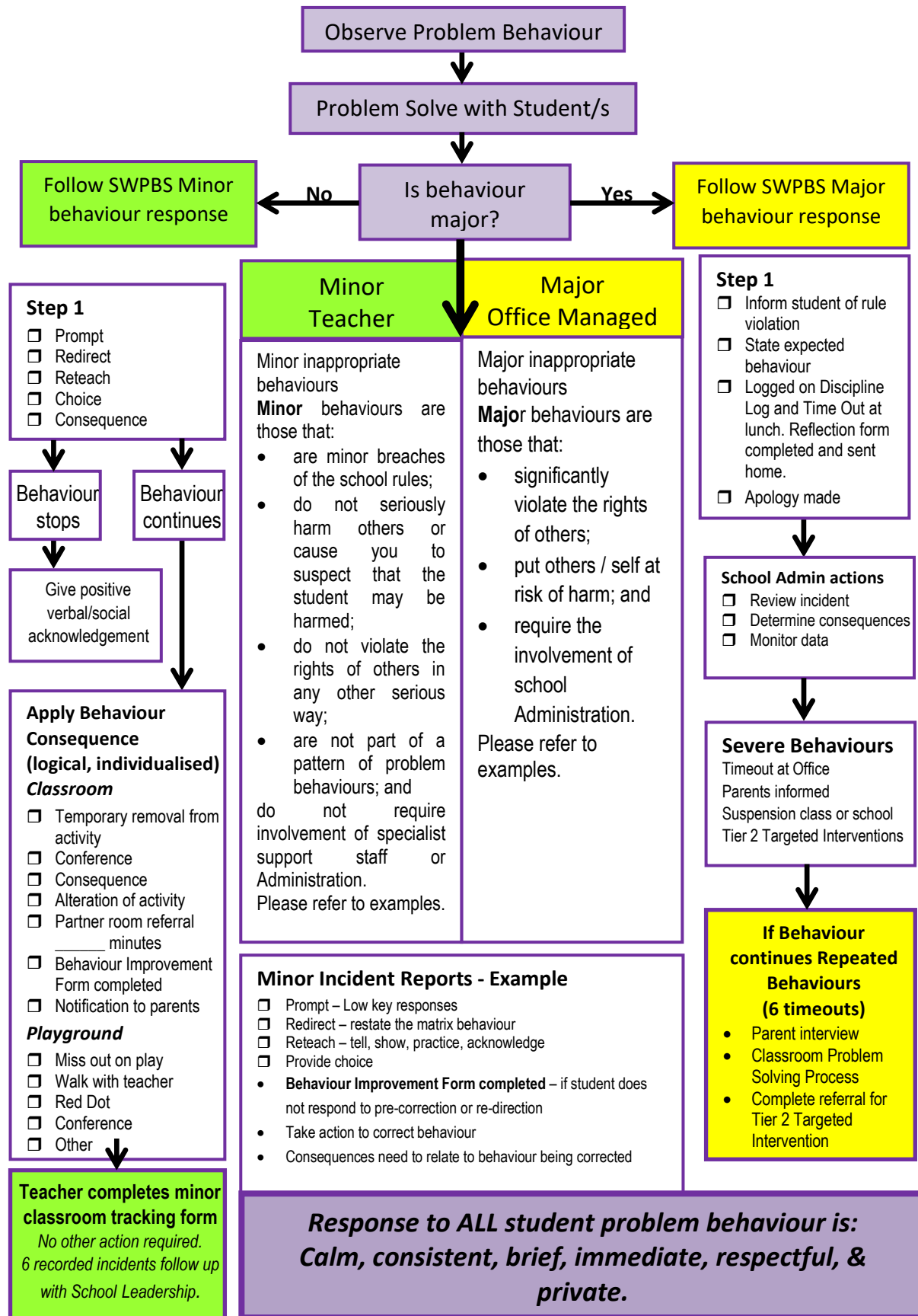
- <https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/suspensions/policy>
- <https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/expulsions/policy>
- <https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/restraint-seclusion/policy>

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



Follow SWPBS Major behaviour response

Step 1

- Inform student of rule violation
- State expected behaviour
- Logged on Discipline Log and Time Out at lunch. Reflection form completed and sent home.
- Apology made

School Admin actions

- Review incident
- Determine consequences
- Monitor data

Severe Behaviours

Timeout at Office
Parents informed
Suspension class or school
Tier 2 Targeted Interventions

If Behaviour continues Repeated Behaviours (6 timeouts)

- Parent interview
- Classroom Problem Solving Process
- Complete referral for Tier 2 Targeted Intervention



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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.

7. 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,
- CASES21 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.

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](#)



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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 [Policies \(bighillps.vic.edu.au\)](#)
- Bullying Prevention Policy [Policies \(bighillps.vic.edu.au\)](#)
- Statement of Values and School Philosophy [Policies \(bighillps.vic.edu.au\)](#)

POLICY REVIEW AND APPROVAL

Policy last reviewed	February 2023
Consultation	School Council and with Parents (newsletter) March 2022
Approved by	Principal
Next scheduled review date	March 2024