

VILLAGE SCHOOL STUDENT WELFARE POLICY

1 POLICY STATEMENT

Village School's educational philosophy is underpinned by the concept of liberalism and tolerance, and promotes humanitarian concerns such as inclusiveness, equity and universal rights.

Village School endeavors to promote and provide a healthy, supportive, secure, child safe environment in which children may thrive. We aim to raise awareness of what makes students resilient and to develop strategies to reduce vulnerabilities, to build connectedness between children and school and to increase coping skills and enhance their learning.

1.1 AIMS

Our three main areas of student welfare are developing resilience, a sense of community and catering to special needs.

We aim to lead children towards self-discipline by increasing in them the values of:

- respect,
- resilience,
- resourcefulness,
- reliability
- responsibility in their daily lives and actions.

Self-discipline is progressively developed through:

- growing self -confidence,
- being willing to accept tasks,
- taking responsibility
- accepting the consequences of actions

Social skills are developed through:

- positive interaction within a group of people,
- showing consideration for the feelings of others,
- respecting property,
- courteous behaviour,
- appropriate behaviour,
- punctuality
- use of acceptable and appropriate behaviour.

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1.2 STRATEGIES USED

Students are enabled to feel empowered as regards their own safety and welfare through the following actions:

- Discussions in homegroups and whole school meetings about safety practices and child safe practices.
- Information supplied to them by their teachers regarding their rights and the Universal Rights of Children
- Teachers informing their groups of the existence of the Child Safe Policy and the Village School Code of Conduct and what it means for them. This information should be delivered formally at the start of each year, but also be revisited during meetings throughout the year if needed.
- The school runs resilience programs such as Freeform and Indigo Kids which enhances their independence and coping skills.
- Peer support programs such as “Big Friend, Little Friend” provide the younger children with an extra security at the start of their school life. The older students develop leadership skills.

2 DEVELOPING A SENSE OF COMMUNITY

We aim to create an environment where the students (and the parents and teachers) feel part of a community, and feel they are a worthwhile member of the community, valued for who they are. Village School practices inclusiveness and tolerance, respecting all cultural and religious beliefs.

2.1 STRATEGIES USED

- The school holds camps, family barbecues, concerts and other social events.
- The school holds regular working bees and families are also part of the animal program on the weekends and with the horse riding.
- Parents are invited to contribute to the classroom programs e.g. Hearing reading, helping with rotation groups.
- The school appoints parent reps who support new families with information and can also be a conduit to the staff and the Board.
- Children are encouraged to initiate fund raising, and school events, such as Idol at Sleepover.
- The annual whole school performance involves parents working with the children cooperatively towards a common goal, developing a sense of community.

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3 EQUITY AND INCLUSION

We aim to cater to the needs of all individuals so that every child has the opportunity to learn to the best of their ability.

- Sometimes students need extra one on one help due to cognitive issues such as dyslexia, dysgraphia or dyscalculia.
- Some students have a physical or behavioural disability (including ADHD, Autism spectrum, eating disorders, anxiety) and they require different levels of adjustments.
- Mental illness can also lead to loss of learning time and a loss of confidence as a result.
- Particular attention is paid to the needs of students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, students who are unable to live at home and international students.
- Ensuring that lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex and queer (LGBTIQ+) students are made to feel safe and welcome in a supportive environment.

3.1 STRATEGIES USED

- Early intervention and recognition of any learning difficulties is the starting point. Parents may be referred to specialists, within and without the school for diagnoses.
- Individual learning plans (ILP) are developed as needed, in consultation with specialists, teachers, parents and the child. The ILP will focus on the child's needs and identify goals and adjustments that the school will make. It is important to state who is responsible for monitoring, implementing and evaluating these individual goals, with a review date set.
- The school provides learning support staff who work within the classrooms to focus on intervention with small groups of children.
- Learning support staff also work one to one with students, as needed, with specially tailored programs such as Toe By Toe for students with dyslexia.
- Teaching programs cater for the diversity within their classrooms.
- The Child Safe Risk Register outlines in Standard 5, the specific strategies that Village School has for promoting inclusion and meeting the diverse needs of the learners.

4 RESTRICTIVE INTERVENTIONS

Physical restraint and seclusion are only permitted in exceptional circumstances where it is immediately required and reasonably necessary to protect the safety of a student or another person. This is a last resort and should only be used in the time that it is required to stop the immediate threat of danger to the child or others. Physical restraint or seclusion should only be used when:

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- there is an imminent threat of physical harm or danger to a student or others and
- the physical restraint and seclusion are reasonable in all the circumstances and
- there is no less restrictive measure available in the circumstances.

After an incident of physical restraint or seclusion, the principal should be notified. The principal must, as soon as practicable (for example, within the same school day), inform parents/carers following an incident in which physical restraint or seclusion has been used with their child. Any incident must be documented using the *Village School Incident Report* template. The principal will ensure that appropriate support is offered to all students and staff involved in an incident of physical restraint or seclusion.

5 SUPERVISION OF STUDENTS

Please refer to the Yard Duty and Supervision Policy for information about supervision of the students at school.

For all off-site activities, Village School conducts risk assessments that take into consideration:

- the experience, qualifications and skills of staff (including volunteers, instructors and so on)
- the age, maturity, physical characteristics and gender of students
- the ability and experience of the students
- the size of the group
- the nature and location of the excursion
- the activities to be undertaken
- known or anticipated weather conditions, monitoring emergency warnings provided through VicEmergency and weather conditions including fire danger ratings.
- emergency response planning
- any other relevant factors.

6 APPLICATION

This policy applies to all staff, parents, school board, volunteers, contractors and all other members of the Village School Community

7 REVIEW

Ongoing discussions during staff meetings refer to this document. It is also reviewed annually.

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Village School Policies	Agreements, Acts & Regulations
Child Protection Policy	Crimes Act 1958 (Vic)
Yard Duty and Supervision Policy	
Child Safety Code of Conduct	Children, Youth and Families Act 2005
Child Safe Standards	Victorian Child Safe Standards
Privacy Policy	Ministerial Order 870
Child Protection Manual	