STUDENT WELLBEING AND ENGAGEMENT POLICY

Help for non-English speakers

If you need help to understand the information in this policy please contact the school at the General Office.

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.

Yarrabing Secondary College 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.

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2. School values, philosophy and vision
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POLICY

1. School profile

Yarrabing Secondary College was established in 2024 and is located approximately 35 kilometres west of Melbourne. When fully established, the school will have 900 students enrolled from Grade 7 to 12 and 100 school staff members including wellbeing staff.

Our school grounds are very close to native bushland, and we are surrounded by a supportive community. Nearly all students that attend our school live locally and walk or ride their bike to school. Although a separate school on its own right, adjacent to our school grounds the Aintree Specialist School will also support our community. Yarrabing Secondary College has developed close ties to the local community and enjoys support from our local shops and community services.

Our school is culturally diverse with 60% of students having a language background other than English (LOTE) spoken in the family home, with the largest LOTE languages being Hindi and Punjabi. The school also has small representation from the Koorie community. We are proud of our diversity and inclusive school community.

Yarrabing Secondary College is committed to lifelong learning by building academic excellence through a challenging and supportive curriculum that results in respect for self, education and the environment. As educators we support the right and the capacity of all students to learn at a high level within a community of learning that fosters the growth and development of the whole person.

Our innovative curriculum and culture of excellence creates a stimulating learning environment that engages and challenges students to achieve personal success and make positive contributions to society. Our school encourages students to strive for excellence in all of their endeavours and to develop skills and knowledge to navigate a future the we know will be quite different to the present.

In order to do this our curriculum and pedagogy supports;

- student growth as creative and critical thinkers.
- engagement with the wider community and include use of a wide variety of technology to assist in student learning.
- the development of emotional and relational capabilities to work collaboratively with people from diverse backgrounds,
- our 21st century curriculum presents students with the opportunity to develop deep understandings on a range of concepts throughout their school lives.
- the use of information technologies to communicate and manipulate information
- self-reflection and an ethical framework that supports students in making positive decisions.

We strive to provide a nurturing and challenging environment that empowers students to reach their personal best, both academically and socially.

2. School values, philosophy and vision

Yarrabing Secondary College'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, high expectations and collaboration at every opportunity.

Our school's vision is to empower our students by developing well rounded, confident and responsible individuals who have high expectations of themselves, and who aspire to achieve success through respect, responsibility and collaboration.

Our school's mission is to be a safe, supportive environment that emphasizes motivation and self-discipline. Using 21st century approaches, we provide students with the means to achieve their potential and we challenge our students to grow academically, socially, culturally and emotionally. Collaboration and positive relationships will underpin all our work.

Yarrabing Secondary College's values are **respect, responsibility, high expectations** and **collaboration**.

- We **respect** ourselves, our school and each another, and understand that our attitudes and behaviours have an impact on the people around us.
- We take on **responsibility** by being personally accountable for, and in control of our actions.
- We set ourselves **high expectations** and strive to achieve success in everything we do, to the best of our ability, and embrace every opportunity that is offered.
- We come together to collaborate and contribute our expertise and thoughts for the benefit of a shared objective or project. **Collaboration** brings people together and enables positive relationships to flourish.

Our Statement of Values and School Philosophy is available on the school website.

3. Wellbeing and engagement strategies

Fundamental to the way we work will be underpinned by two frameworks, the School Wide Positive Behaviour Support (SWPBS) framework and the tiered approach to Student Management Framework as outlined below:

School Wide Positive Behaviour Support (SWPBS) framework

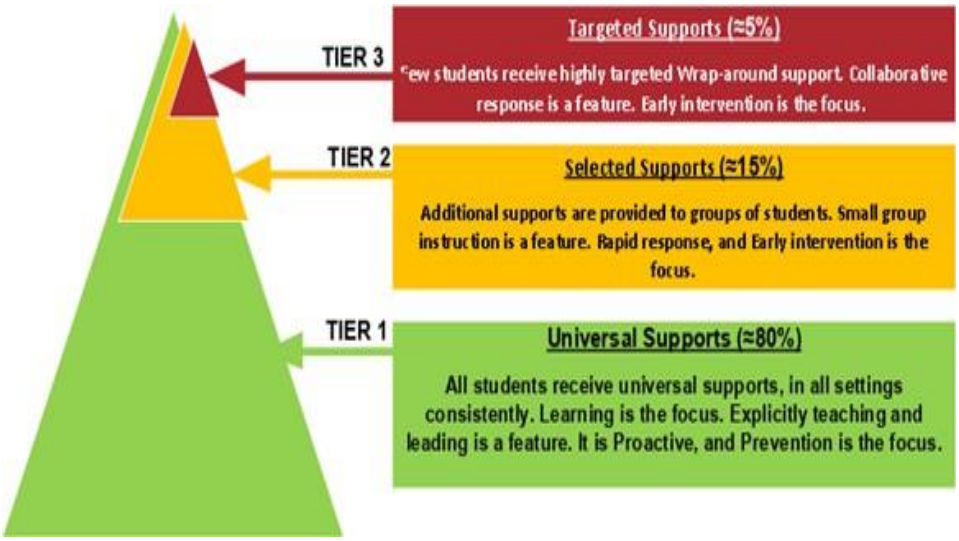
SWPBS is an evidence-based framework for responding to student behaviour. It aims to create a positive school climate, a culture of student self-regulation and an open, responsive management system for the school community which allows schools to improve the educational and behavioural outcomes for all students. School Wide Positive Behaviours involves the establishment of a continuum of strategies that support students and teachers. The continuum includes proactive strategies for defining, teaching, and supporting appropriate student behaviours to create positive school environments.

Yarrabing Secondary College has developed a year level pastoral care system which will be overseen by a Year Level Leader and Coordinators. As the students' progress, these staff will follow them into the new year level. This system ensures that students supported by staff who know them well for the duration of their formative schooling. This encourages a positive and constructive relationships with not only students, but families as well.

Yarrabing Secondary College uses a Restorative Practices approach to student behaviour and wellbeing. Restorative Practices, based on the concept of Restorative Justice, are the link between care and support for our students and discipline procedures. They have at their foundation the belief that student wellbeing is integral to teaching and learning and they are based on cooperation, collaboration and respectful dialogue. The objective of restorative practices is to offer an opportunity for the student to make amends and restore the relationship.

When an incident or challenges occur, the two parties (staff and students) are encouraged to reflect on their behaviour and/or actions, helping them to understand how the situation came about and how they can change their action / response in the future if the same situation arises. Reflection opportunities allow growth for all parties involved.

Tiered approach to student management framework



Tier One – Primary Prevention

Primary prevention is significant as it moves the school community from reactive approaches to proactive systems. Primary prevention cohesively unites the staff at Yarrabing Secondary College in using

1) common language
2) common practices
3) consistent application of positive reinforcement

Primary Prevention, through positive behaviour support, works for over 80% of all students in a given school and is a school wide approach. Primary Prevention consists of the Yarrabing Secondary

College Agreed Behaviour Matrix, which outlines the expected behaviours and routines which are linked to our school values of Respect, Responsibility, High Expectations and Collaboration.

Tier Two- Secondary Prevention
Students who access the secondary prevention level of support equate to approximately 15% of students. Secondary Prevention is designed to provide targeted interventions to support students who are not responding to Primary Prevention efforts. Interventions within Secondary Prevention are more intensive and aim to teach replacement behaviours specifically and explicitly. Secondary prevention strategies at are targeted through the implementation of a Positive Behaviour Support Plan (PBSP). The PBSP for a student focuses directly on developing positive replacement behaviours and strategies which allow the student to interact positively, school wide.

Tier Three - Tertiary Prevention
Tertiary Prevention is designed to focus on the needs of individuals who repeatedly exhibit patterns of difficult behaviour. Students presenting behaviours within this tier are those with complex and chronic needs for whom both primary and secondary interventions have been insufficient to facilitate success. This accounts for approximately 5% of students. Tertiary prevention is best executed when it is conducted in a comprehensive and collaborative manner. Support is tailored to student's specific needs and circumstances. This involves a comprehensive approach to understanding and intervening with the behaviour. Staff teams meet to work together to develop strategies, programs and systems that provide a higher level of support to individual students. Tertiary Prevention will involve appropriate functional behavioural assessment and the development of an associated plan. These can be comprised of individualised, assessment-based intervention strategies, including a wide range of options such as:

1. guidance or instruction for the student to use new skills as a replacement for problem behaviours,
2. some rearrangement of the antecedent environment so that challenges can be addressed, and desirable behaviours can be encouraged.
3. procedures for monitoring, evaluating, and reassessing of the plan as necessary. The plan will guide the actions of others to respond consistently, to reduce the distress of the student and to maintain the safety of all involved.

In addition, Yarrabing Secondary College 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:

<u>Universal</u>

- 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
- deliver a broad curriculum including, in future years, VCE, VCE Vocational Major and VPC to ensure that students are able to choose subjects and programs that are tailored to their interests, strengths and aspirations
- teachers at Yarrabing Secondary College use the GANAG 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 Yarrabing Secondary College 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
- 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 and other forums including year group meetings and Peer Support Groups. Students are also encouraged to speak with their teachers, Year Level Coordinator, Assistant Principal and Principal whenever they have any questions or concerns.
- create opportunities for cross—age connections amongst students through school plays, athletics, music programs and peer support programs
- all students are welcome to self-refer to the Student Support Services Team, Year Level 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 school wide positive behaviour support with our staff and students, which includes programs such as:
  - Respectful Relationships
  - Restorative Practice
  - Safe Schools
- programs, incursions and excursions developed to address issue specific needs or behaviour (i.e. anger management programs)
- opportunities for student inclusion (i.e. sports teams, clubs, recess 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

- each year group has a Year Group Coordinator, a senior 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
- Koorie students are connected and supported by the Department's Koorie Engagement Support Officer and the school's Koorie Support Officer to engage fully in their education, in a positive learning environment that understands and appreciates the strength of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture. Please contact the school's Koorie Support Officer for further information.
- 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 including measures such as providing school signage in different languages, encouraging students to speak their first language at school, and displaying non-English books and materials.
- Cultural and linguistically diverse students are connected and supported by the school's Multicultural Support Officers to engage fully in their education. Our Multicultural Support Officers work closely with these students and their families as well as offer Professional Learning to school staff to further develop their understanding of their student's cultures and backgrounds. Please contact the school's Multicultural Support Officers for further information.
- we support learning and wellbeing outcomes of students from refugee background through providing professional learning and resources to staff and specific learning strategies to these students. Yarrabing Secondary College staff have access to the Department's programs (the Schools Support Program which is delivered by Foundation House and the Learning Beyond the Bell program which is delivered by Centre for Multicultural Youth) in providing support to our students of refugee background. These department-funded initiatives aim to build the capacity of schools to support students and families from refugee backgrounds.
- 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 . At Yarrabing Secondary College we support our students who identify as LGBTIQ+ by:
  - ensuring that our policies, practices and activities are inclusive and do not have the effect of treating any student adversely because of their sex, gender or sexuality
  - taking positive action to eliminate discrimination or harassment of students on the basis of their sex, gender or sexuality.

    - working together with students affirming their gender identity, and their families to prepare and implement a student support plan
- 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
- 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
- Yarrabing Secondary College assists students to plan their Year 10 work experience, supported by their Career Action Plan

Individual

Yarrabing Secondary College 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
- Being responsive and sensitive to changes in the student's circumstances or wellbeing
- Building constructive relationships with all students, including students at risk or students who are vulnerable
- Considering if any environmental changes need to be made e.g. changing the classroom set up, peer support, seating plan
- Being responsive to individual student data such as attendance, student survey, assessment, Attitudes to School Survey, student management data and enrolment information
- meeting with student and their parent/carer to talk about how best to help the student engage with school Referrals are made to House teams or the Student Support Services team staff to enable access to learning, social and emotional support
- Student participation in mediation and restorative practices to restore and rebuild relationships
- Implementation of Restorative Discussions and School Wide Positive Behaviours language.
- Documented plans developed in conjunction with the student e.g. Attendance Plans, Individual Learning Plan, Behaviour Support Plan, Program for Students with Disabilities (PSD)
- Student Support Groups (SSG) every term/semester for students with funded support.
- 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 ChildFirst/Orange Door
    - Re-engagement programs such as Navigator
    - Short-term participation in specialised educational settings such as specialised teaching units and NewStart.
- 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 Education Support Officers
    - running regular Student Support Group meetings for all students:
        - with a disability
        - in Out of Home Care
        - with other complex needs that require ongoing support and monitoring.

4. Identifying students in need of support

Yarrabing Secondary College is committed to providing the necessary support to ensure our students are supported intellectually, emotionally and socially. The Student Support Services team plays a significant role in developing and implementing strategies to help identify students in need of support and enhance student wellbeing. Yarrabing Secondary College 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
- data from enrolment, attendance, student survey, assessment, Attitudes to School Survey, student management, detentions and suspensions
- identification of concerns through writing, social media, in conversation and from their 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 and School Philosophy 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.

At Yarrabing Secondary College the right and responsibilities on students, staff and parents and carers are outlined in **Appendix 1**

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 are grounded in our school's Statement of Values and School Philosophy. 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, Yarrabing Secondary College 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 implement 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, with a warning of an appropriate consequence if the behaviour continues in line with our Agreed Behaviours Matrix
- 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 where repairs to physical or emotional damage is undertaken
- 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

The Principal of Yarrabing Secondary College 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.

7. Engaging with families

Yarrabing Secondary College 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.
- Communicating daily student absences and lateness to school
- 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 such as second-hand books and uniforms, mental health services, and Camps and School Excursions funding
- including families in Student Support Groups and developing individual education plans (IEP) and Positive Behaviour Support Plans (PBSP) for students.

8. Evaluation

Yarrabing Secondary College 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 absence data
- SOCS

Yarrabing Secondary College will also regularly monitor available data dashboards to ensure any wellbeing or engagement issues are acted upon in a timely manner and any intervention occurs as soon as possible.

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 in transition and enrolment packs
- included in student diaries so that it is easily accessible to parents, carers and students
- 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

FURTHER INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

- The Department's Policy and Advisory Library (PAL):
  - 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

- Related Policies:
  - Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy
  - Bullying Prevention Policy
  - Inclusion and Diversity Policy
  - Statement of Values and School Philosophy
  - Complaints Policy
  - Duty of Care Policy

POLICY REVIEW AND APPROVAL

Policy last reviewed	November 2025
Consultation	School Council – December 2025 School Community via Compass Notification and Newsletter
Approved by	Principal
Next scheduled review date	Before November 2027

APPENDIX 1: Yarrabing Secondary College the right and responsibilities on students, staff and parents and carers matrix

	Students	Staff	Parents/Guardians
Rights	• Be treated fairly and with respect • Be valued as individuals and have their unique learning styles recognised and catered for so that they can learn and maximise their potential • Expect a learning program that meets their individual needs • Participate fully in the school's educational program • Have a safe, secure environment that is free from intimidation, bullying and harassment • Be provided with exemplary role models by all staff of the School • Be regularly informed of their progress • Be involved in the decision making process of the School • Access the school network services with written parental permission	• Expect student to follow reasonable instructions given by teachers in the performance of their duties • Expect that they will be able to teach in an orderly and cooperative environment • Expect students to be punctual and regular in attendance to school and classes and take all the required equipment to participate • Use discretion in the application of rules and consequences and be fair and consistent in their application • Be informed, within Privacy requirements, about matters relating to students that will affect the teaching and learning program for that student • Receive respect and support from the school community • Expect that students observe all classroom and School rules and expectations as documented in the Student Code of Conduct	• Expect that their children will be educated in a secure environment in which care, courtesy and respect for the rights of others are encouraged • Expect communication and participation in their child's education and learning • Expect a positive and supportive approach to their child's learning and to be included in the education of their child.
Responsibilities	• Respect the rights of fellow students, staff and members of the School • Behave in a positive manner that contributes to the learning of fellow students, does not disrupt the learning of students and enables teachers to teach in an atmosphere of cooperation • Take responsibility for their learning and use the resources and teachers of the School to facilitate and support their learning • Respect and not interfere with the Computer hardware, software, systems and networks provided by the School in any manner including the introduction of viruses • Observe copyright laws and licence agreements; the loading of computer games is not permitted • Use the computer network to only transmit material which is not in violation of any state, federal or international law (including anything pornographic, obscene, threatening or harassing) • Maintain and use their network file storage area responsibly and not interfere with or trespass in others' folders work or files.	• Fairly, reasonably and consistently, implement the engagement policy. • Use positive reinforcement and encouragement to build self-esteem • Build positive relationships with students • Know how students learn and how to teach them effectively. • -Know the content they teach. • Know their students. • Plan and assess for effective learning. • Create and maintain safe and challenging learning environments. • Implement the anti-bullying and harassment policy • Access specialist welfare and referral services when required • Use a range of teaching strategies and resources to engage students in effective learning. • Regular monitoring of student progress, attendance, participation and welfare • Treat all members of the school community with respect, fairness and dignity • Keep parents and guardians informed on student progress and learning	• Promote positive educational outcomes for their children by taking an active interest in their child's educational progress and by modelling positive behaviours. • Ensure their child's regular attendance • Engage in regular and constructive communication with school staff regarding their child's learning. • Support the school in maintaining a safe and respectful learning environment for all students. • Build positive relationships with members of the school community • -Ensure students have the appropriate learning materials and uniform • Promote respectful relationships • Ensure their child's regular and punctual attendance. -maintain regular and constructive communication with the school regarding their child.