



TONGALA PRIMARY SCHOOL

Respect, Resilience, Responsibility

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Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy



HELP FOR NON-ENGLISH SPEAKERS

If you need help to understand the information in this policy, please contact Tongala Primary School on 03 5859 0551 or tongala.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.

Tongala Primary 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.

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POLICY

1. School profile

Tongala Primary School is located in the rural town of Tongala in Northern Victoria approximately 200km north of Melbourne. We currently have approximately 145 students from Foundation to Year 6.

Our current strategic plan has focuses on improved teaching and learning, with a focus on Mathematics and Literacy, and incorporating the Victorian Curriculum in all learning areas, along with greater parent participation. Our student growth also led us to be eligible for a multi-Purpose Room, which provides additional space for Visual and Performing

Arts, as well as STEM, school performances and extra-curricular activities. Staffing consists of a principal, seven full time class teachers, full time Wellbeing Officer, 0.4 Tutoring, PE teacher, 0.4 Environmental Studies teacher, 0.4 Visual Arts teacher, 0, full time Business Manager and 6 Education Support Workers.

Tongala Primary School's enrolment includes approximately 10% indigenous students, 3% with EAL backgrounds and 4% receiving funding through PSD.

To manage student diversity, we have a full time Student Wellbeing Officer, who works with students and their families. Students also take part in mindfulness daily and Community Circles, as well as being a School Wide Positive Behaviour school. Tongala Primary School is working with leading Educational Experts, Real Schools, to develop a culture of Restorative Practices.

Each day we begin with 15 minutes of Huff n Puff to get the brain going and ready for school. A Breakfast Club runs 3 mornings a week allowing students to meet and eat before school and fruit and emergency lunches are provided as needed every day.

Our school prides itself on providing our students an innovative and progressive curriculum, with access to many hands on learning experiences, through our large Environmental Garden area, our Hands-on Learning program and Community Engagement programs.

The new school building was completed in 2013 under BER funding. It provides flexible open spaces and incorporates a range of digital technologies including a 1:2 iPad ratio in the junior school and a BYOD iPad program in the 3-6 area. Our school also provides netbook computers and high speed access to the internet. Each classroom has an interactive screen, allowing students and teachers to connect with their learning more efficiently.

Through the student leadership program students are involved with the running of school assemblies and represent the school at community events throughout the year. We also have House Captains elected by the students who have responsibilities around sporting and special events and organizing lunchtime activities for students, as well as leading our monthly house meetings. Year 6 students have a buddies program with Foundation students to ensure they feel safe and valued at school. Part of the year 6 leadership program sees the students taking an active role in the community through the running of services for the RSL on ANZAC Day, Remembrance Day, Legacy and Beersheba Day. Students regularly visit Tongala Aged Care to spend time with the residents, assist with Morning Tea at the local Community Centre and are strongly linked to work with the Lions Club for Public Speaking Competitions and a Scholarship program. The introduction of the Tongala Young Leaders group has provided a student voice around what they want to see happening in our school.

Our school is part of the Dogs Connect program. We have a full-time wellbeing dog at our school. Charlie, a male Groodle, provides a unique offering to our anxious and somewhat disengaged students, but is part of our school community and is adored by all students, staff and families.

Transition at Tongala Primary School is very comprehensive and takes into account all levels of transition. Kinder to Foundation transition occurs throughout the year with students visiting the Kinder and the local Kinders visiting school. Throughout term 4 transition sessions operate every week with pre-school children coming to work in the classroom for the last session of the day. Kinder students also participate in monthly art lessons at our school. Year 6 to 7 transition sessions are organized by the Secondary Colleges and involve information sessions, hands-on learning activities and familiarization tasks. Students requiring additional transition visits are catered for by Tongala Primary School to ensure they are confident as they leave us and go on to the next level of education. Transition between grades occurs throughout the year with multi-aged activities and other organized experiences.

Our grounds are expansive and consist of two playgrounds with various equipment, two ovals, an undercover asphalt area, a synthetic basketball court and a large environmental area. The installation of the Tongala Community Fitness Hub has been a huge asset to our school. This consists of a 400 metre running track and 18 piece exercise fitness station. The redevelopment of our Lone Pine memorial at the front of the school, provides a great space to host services.

Staff are constantly developing their own capacity through undertaking relevant Professional Development, both internally and externally. These sessions relate directly to school needs and priorities and aim to support the academic and emotional development of our students. This work has led us to become a Professional Learning

Community (PLC) Link School. This involvement will see our school lead the way in PLC's and provide opportunities for other schools to come and view the work we are doing. Our school was also part of the Primary Maths Specialist program, which has transformed the way we deliver and learn Mathematics.

2. School values, philosophy and vision

Tongala Primary School will provide high quality education in a safe, supportive and engaging learning community that leads to all students achieving their potential. Our School Values, Vision and Statement of Philosophy is able to be located online at: <https://www.tongalaps.vic.edu.au>

3. Wellbeing and engagement strategies

Tongala Primary 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 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 Tongala Primary School use an 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 Tongala Primary School 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 Young Leaders Program and other forums including class meetings and various leadership positions.
- Students are encouraged to speak with their teachers, Leading teacher student engagement and wellbeing 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 Wellbeing Coordinator, 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
 - School Wide Positive Behaviour Framework
 - Restorative Conversations
- programs, incursions and excursions developed to address issue specific needs or behaviour
- opportunities for student inclusion (i.e. sports teams, clubs, recess and lunchtime activities)
- buddy 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
- 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
- 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
- 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](#)
- 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 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

Individual

- [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](#)

Tongala Primary 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
- 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 The Orange Door.
 - Re-engagement programs such as Navigator

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
 - with other complex needs that require ongoing support and monitoring.

4. Identifying students in need of support

Tongala Primary School 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 help identify students in need of support and enhance student wellbeing. Tongala Primary 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
- 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
- Multidisciplinary team meeting minutes

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, 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.

6. Student behavioural expectations and management

Behavioural expectations of students are grounded in our school's Statement of Values and student code of conduct. 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, Tongala 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 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
- teacher controlled consequences such as moving a student in a classroom or other reasonable and proportionate responses to misbehaviour
- restorative practices
- referral to the Leadership Team
- 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 Tongala Primary 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.

7. Engaging with families

Tongala Primary 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, 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

Tongala Primary School 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
- Student Attitudes to School Data
- incidents data
- school reports
- parent survey
- case management
- CASES21, including attendance and absence data
- SOCS
- Compass Data
- LiveSchool Data

Tongala Primary School 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 and Compass
- Included in staff induction processes
- Included in transition and enrolment packs
- 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 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
- Bullying Prevention Policy
- Inclusion and Diversity Policy
- Statement of Values and School Philosophy

POLICY REVIEW AND APPROVAL

Policy last reviewed	August 2025
Consultation	To occur during School Council meeting as part of our Child Safety on 15/9/25
Approved by	Principal Rob Hogan
Next scheduled review date	August 2027 – noting a 2-year review cycle