

STUDENT WELLBEING AND ENGAGEMENT POLICY



Help for non-English speakers

If you need help to understand the information in this policy, please contact Eastern Ranges School 9758 3772.

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.

Eastern Ranges 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 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

Eastern Ranges School provides a quality educational program aligned to the Victorian Curriculum (VC) and

Victorian Pathways Certificate (VPC) focusing on the needs of autistic students, an associated intellectual disability and a language disorder. Our programs are informed by current research and are embedded in best practice, focusing on preparation for transitions to post school pathways. The community of learners are supported by an enthusiastic and skilled staff that is comprised of teachers, therapists and education support staff.

Eastern Ranges School is located in Ferntree Gully in the North Eastern Victoria Region, we proudly provide education for children with autism and an associated intellectual disability, language disorder and complex learning needs, across the Foundation to Year 12 age range.

Our facilities include age-appropriate classrooms and playgrounds, therapy rooms, library, a gymnasium, sports court and pool. The Depot (to develop and build work ethic and employability skills), a primary school kitchen and industry standard kitchen, Eastern Ranges Coffee Beans Café run by our barista trained students, a contemporary living centre that develops functional living skills, and a professional learning centre which supports our commitment to lifelong learning for our school and wider community.

As an educational provider, Eastern Ranges School develops and implements innovative and specialised programs that focus on the needs of students with autism. Our programs are informed by current research and are embedded in best practice and prepare our students and their families for the future. Our vision is supported through our values of teamwork, respect, inclusion, responsibility, achievement and optimism which are underpinned by our School Wide Positive Behaviour Support (SWPBS) commitment to work together to create safe, respectful and responsible learners.

Our focus is on creating personalised and engaging learning programs and experiences that align with the Victorian Curriculum (F-10) and outcomes of the Victorian Pathways Certificate (yrs 10-12), through a hands on and functional approach to learning.

Our highly skilled team of teachers and education support staff are complimented by a dynamic and outcome focused multidisciplinary team consisting of 3 Speech Pathologists, 3 Occupational Therapists, 2 Music Therapist and a Psychologist, transition team, and an engagement and well-being staff to facilitate a team approach to promoting engagement in learning and increased wellbeing for all.

2. School values, philosophy and vision

Eastern Ranges School's Statement of Values and School Philosophy is integral to the work that we do and is the foundation of our school community.

At Eastern Ranges School we are committed and driven to seek success for all in a positive, safe, energetic and collaborative environment that values diversity, respects and recognises the contributions of all, celebrates achievement and builds community.

In doing so, we are guided by the values and implicit behaviours of:

- **Teamwork**
- **Respect**
- **Inclusion**
- **Responsibility**
- **Achievement**
- **Optimism**

At Eastern Ranges School we acknowledge that student wellbeing and learning outcomes are intricately linked, and we address this directly using our School Wide Positive Behaviour Support (SWPBS) framework. The school is committed to implementing the SWPBS framework in 2018 under the *Victorian SWPBS School Collaboration Agreement* with the Department of Education and Training. Please refer to our school's *ERS*

SWPBS Handbook for more information on the SWPBS framework.

Our SWPBS Behaviour Purpose Statement outlines our intentions for all community members:

At Eastern Ranges we work together to create safe, respectful and responsible learners.

Our SWPBS approach focuses on supporting student well-being and engagement by teaching and reinforcing behaviours that link to our school-wide expectations. These expectations are:

- **Safe**
- **Respectful**
- **Responsible**
- **Learner**

Behaviours that represent these values are consistently taught, practiced and reinforced across all school environments.

Our Statement of Values is available online at: <https://easternrangesschool.vic.edu.au/parents/>

3. Engagement strategies

Eastern Ranges School has developed a range of strategies to promote engagement, positive behaviour and respectful relationships for all students in our school. 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.

Our school endeavours to work collaboratively with students and parents/carers to establish fair and respectful behaviour policies and practices based on the school's values and expectations, social competencies and positive peer relationships. There are also intervention strategies in place to address behaviours which can negatively impact on the learning environment of the student themselves and others using our *ERS Behaviour Response Continuum*. For students who require more intensive social, emotional and behavioural support, the school offers a range of multi-tiered systems of support. All are part of our SWPBS framework and are dependent on the specific needs of the student.

The universal (Tier 1 – universal), targeted (Tier 2 – targeted) and individual (Tier 3 - tertiary) supports are reinforced by the school Matrix and embedded within students' educational programs. Further information on the specific interventions used can be found in the *ERS SWPBS Handbook*.

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
- 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, SWPBS Self-Assessment Survey, Tiered Fidelity Inventory data, parent survey data, student management data and school level assessment data
- deliver a broad curriculum including VC, VET programs and VPC to ensure that students are able to choose subjects and programs that are tailored to their interests, strengths and aspirations
- teachers at Eastern Ranges School use a Structured Teaching 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 Eastern Ranges 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 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. Students are also encouraged to speak with their teachers, Assistant Principal and Principal whenever they have any questions or concerns.
- we engage in school wide positive behaviour support with our staff and students, which includes programs such as:
 - Respectful Relationships
 - I Can Network
 - Blue Edge
 - Seasons for Growth
 - Safe Schools
- opportunities for student inclusion (i.e., sports teams, clubs, recess, and lunchtime activities)

Implementation of strategies to support student engagement

Our staff, programs and policies support student engagement at Eastern Ranges School in the following ways:

- Student attendance is recorded and monitored on a daily basis using Sentral.
- Student attendance is encouraged by:
 - Each student having an Individual Education Plan (IEP), which addresses individual needs, interests and skills through curriculum content and individual learning goals.
 - Where applicable, student involvement in the SSG and goal setting process.
 - Professional, positive and friendly staff who effectively implement SWPBS strategies across all school environments.
 - Special responsibilities and activities for students (e.g. student voice agency and leadership opportunities).
 - Positive relationships developed with students and their families / carers through open and honest communication.

Positive (pro-social) behaviour is encouraged by

- The use of evidence-based strategies to support autistic learners, such as visual schedules and supports, work systems, task organisation, individual social narratives and video models, to develop an ASD-friendly physical environment and promote positive behaviour.
- The use of positive behaviour acknowledgement programs (e.g., School-wide Token Acknowledgement System).
- Our *ERS Behaviour Matrix*.
- The development of appropriate individualised communication systems / augmentative and alternative communication (AAC).
- The provision of programs to practice social behaviours (e.g. eating / drinking appropriately, dressing, toileting, hygiene and grooming skills and so on).
- The prescription of Safe Travel Agreement to support pro-social behaviour on the school buses.

- The provision of opportunities to practice pro-social behaviour in the community (e.g. excursions, camps).
- Targeted social skills programs.
- Programs to address executive functioning skills that guide behaviour such as response inhibition, emotional control, attention, task initiation, flexibility and persistence.
- 1:1 and paired music therapy for individual students that have been identified as needing extra support to engage in the school environment. This is tailored to the individual student's interests and needs. This may include improvisation, song writing, and therapeutic music teaching.
- A consistent approach across the school to address students' self-regulation. This includes education to staff regarding ways to provide co-regulation.
- Play therapy and play skills programs to encourage the development of imaginative play and positive peer interactions.
- The provision of structures to support positive behaviour includes the development of an individual *ERS Tier 1 checklist* that supports all students, an *ERS Safety Plan (SP)* when necessary and / or an *ERS Behaviour Support Plan (BSP)* using the *Prevent-Teach-Reinforce* model. Both the *SP* and *BSP* are developed using the templates and online training modules provided by Department of Education. More information on these models can be found: <http://detbehavioursupport.vic.edu.au/>

Student wellbeing is addressed by:

- The IEP process leading to the development of individual programs.
- The inclusion of all students through programs incorporating different learning styles, teaching methods and strategies.
- Evidence based consultation model delivered by therapy staff
- Specialist programs including art, PE, music, performing arts and swimming.
- The development and continuation of a SWPBS team that embeds supports across each tier.
- The implementation of SWPBS strategies / processes across all school environments.

- School wide communication strategies that support development of student initiated, spontaneous and functional communication.
- Communication / AAC supports: including environmental Aided-Language Displays (ALDs), CoreBoard and CoreChat and other individual student communication devices including LAMP, Proloquo etc.
- Provision of a safe and nurturing environment.
- Consistent implementation of school wide approaches to address student specific needs relating to wellbeing.
- Student Support Groups (SSGs) which meet four times per year.
- A collaborative, multidisciplinary team approach: Teachers, Education Support Staff, Speech Pathologists, Occupational Therapists, Music Therapist, Psychologist, families and school leadership.
- Appropriate Professional Development for staff relating to Structured Teaching, Autism, SWPBS, communication, sensory needs and teaching and learning.

Targeted

- Our Mental Health Wellbeing Leader and Child Safe Team are 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
- 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
- all students in Out of Home Care will be appointed a Learning Mentor, have an Individual Learning Plan and a Student Support Group (SSG) and will be referred to Student Support Services for an Educational Needs Assessment
- Eastern Ranges School assists students to plan their Year 10 work experience, supported by their Career Action Plan
- The wellbeing needs of students are reviewed and staff and the school provide professional learning (PL) in a response to needs identified by student wellbeing data, classroom teachers or other school staff each year.

Individual

Eastern Ranges 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 Education Plan and/or a tier 3 support.
- considering if any environmental changes need to be made, for example changing the classroom set up
- referring the student to:
 - school-based wellbeing supports such as allied health and Engagement and Wellbeing Team.
 - 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, DFFH or Orange Door.

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 modified timetable plans where appropriate in collaboration with the student and their family
- running regular Student Support Group meetings for all students:

4. Identifying students in need of support

Eastern Ranges School is committed to providing the necessary support to ensure our students are supported intellectually, emotionally and socially. The SWPBS team plays a significant role in developing and implementing strategies to help identify students in need of support to enhance student wellbeing. Eastern Ranges School will utilise the following information and tools to identify students in need of extra emotional, social or educational support:

- Personal information gathered upon enrolment
- Attendance records
- Academic performance
- Observations by school staff such as changes in engagement, behaviour, self-care, social connectedness and motivation **AND** reported on our Sentral Wellbeing reporting system.
- Dynamic and informal assessments by school-based allied health professionals and Engagement and Wellbeing staff
- Engagement with families
- SWPBS and Engagement Wellbeing referrals
- Engagement with students' families
- Edusafe Plus reports
- Records of student injuries (CASES 21)

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. Our school's Statement of Values highlights the rights and responsibilities of members of our community.

The Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority (VRQA), as regulator for all Victorian schools, has responsibility for ensuring compliance with the Child Safe Standards in schools. At ERS we committed to upholding the standards and the rights of our students. The Standards are:

- Standard 1: Organisations establish a culturally safe environment in which the diverse and unique identities and experiences of Aboriginal children and young people are respected and valued.
- Standard 2: Child safety and wellbeing is embedded in organisational leadership, governance and culture.
- Standard 3: Children and young people are empowered about their rights, participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously.
- Standard 4: Families and communities are informed and involved in promoting child safety and wellbeing.
- Standard 5: Equity is upheld and diverse needs respected in policy and practice.
- Standard 6: People working with children and young people are suitable and supported to reflect child safety and wellbeing values in practice.
- Standard 7: Processes for complaints and concerns are child-focused.

- Standard 8: Staff and volunteers are equipped with the knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children and young people safe through ongoing education and training.
- Standard 9: Physical and online environments promote safety and wellbeing while minimising the opportunity for children and young people to be harmed.
- Standard 10: Implementation of the Child Safe Standards is regularly reviewed and improved.
- Standard 11: Policies and procedures document how the organisation is safe for children and young people.

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
- express their wants, needs, choices, interests, decisions with support from school staff and care providers

Students are expected to:

- be safe, respectful, responsible and a learner
- participate fully in their educational program
- display 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.

6. Student behavioural expectations and management

Rationale:

- At ERS, we believe that **ALL** behaviour has a specific function / purpose. We recognise that autistic students with an intellectual disability may have impairments in the areas of social skill development and communication, and therefore often require an individual approach that focuses on: understanding the individual's learning / emotional needs, having knowledge of the triggers that may cause an escalation in the student's behaviour cycle and adapting the environment to avoid triggers.
- Students who attend Eastern Ranges School may exhibit behaviours of concern. These behaviours are often associated with the student's diagnosis of intellectual disability and Autism. Behaviours may also indicate communication and / or sensory needs.

Aims:

- At Eastern Ranges School we aim to address student behaviour in a way that promotes positive supportive behaviour strategies and skill development, whilst minimizing any risk to students or staff.

Guidelines

At ERS, we use our SWPBS framework in-line with the Department of Education and Training (2018) Policy guidance, procedures and resources for the reduction and elimination of restraint and seclusion and the online training module *Behaviour Response Planning* to respond to behaviours of concern. Links to these resources can be found below:

<https://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/teachers/studentmanagement/Pages/behaviourofconcern.aspx>

<http://detbehavioursupport.vic.edu.au/>

Combining our SWPBS framework with the guidance, staff follow four steps when responding to behaviours of concern:

- Prevention and early intervention
- De-escalation
- Incident intervention
- Response and recovery

Further information on how each step is implemented at ERS can be found in the *ERS SWPBS Handbook*.

Other recommended strategies include:

- Providing effective communication systems.
- Teaching expected behaviours / skills using modelling, visual schedules, structured work systems, visual aids, video models and self-models and social narratives.
- Providing opportunities for the students to practice and perfect the behaviour / skill learned.
- Reviewing, correcting and testing the behaviour / skill learned.
- Embedding the behaviour / skill in the daily curriculum.
- Using positive rewards and reinforcement to encourage the expected behaviour.
- Ignoring undesirable attention-seeking behaviours where appropriate and safe to do so.

Other guiding principles

- Student welfare and student behaviour is a shared responsibility for all staff. All major incidents are recorded on-line through our Sentral reporting system and followed up with an Edusafe report, report of student injury and / or an *ERS Record of Restraint and Seclusion* form as appropriate.
- If any members of our school community have concerns about student behaviour, they are encouraged to bring it to the attention of teaching staff, Engagement and Wellbeing staff, SWPBS team, Assistant Principals or the Principal.
- If deemed necessary, behaviours of concern can be addressed through a behaviour support meeting called by leadership or parent / carer. Please see *ERS Behaviour Support Flow Chart (Appendix H)* for more information. Where possible, staff are encouraged to bring data about the behaviour to the meeting. The care team will generate support plans, which are expected to be followed through, with data taken to support the strategies, or interventions put in place. Interventions are to be implemented for a period and reviewed with collected data.
- If a *SP* or *BSP* are created, they are endorsed by the parent / carer, the SWPBS Learning Specialist and the Principal.
- All behaviour plans will be documented and filed. A copy will be placed in the student's confidential file, on the student's Sentral profile and in the student's classroom. A copy will be forwarded to all members of the Student Support Group.
- It is the responsibility of the classroom teacher to ensure that all relevant staff are informed

of the *SP / BSP*. Information should also be provided at Team Meetings if required. All staff are expected to follow the plan.

- All *ERS* Behaviour support documentation will be located in the work program folder in each classroom for access by CRT staff.
- Curriculum development and implementation will support the development of responsible behaviours to replace behaviours of concern (e.g. *SWPBS* curriculum, self-regulation strategies etc.)
- **Restraint or seclusion must only be used if it is immediately required to protect the safety of the student or any other person, and no other option is available. The restraint or seclusion must be reasonable and proportionate to the situation. If used, all restraint and seclusion **MUST** be used:**
 1. With the minimum amount of force
 2. For the minimum duration
 3. With the least restriction possible
 4. Witnessed by another staff member (when possible)

If any form of restraint or seclusion is used, the following must take place as soon as is practical:

- The incident is recorded on Sentral as a MAJOR incident
 - An *ERS Record of Restraint and Seclusion* form is completed and attached to the incident on Sentral
 - The Principal is notified
 - The parent is notified by either the Principal, their nominee or classroom teacher
 - DET Security Services Unit are notified by the Principal or their nominee
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- OH&S representatives, in consultation with therapists, are available to work with staff to provide risk management and assistance where needed for students who require assistance to stand or move.
 - Further information is available in the *SWPBS Handbook*.

School actions following behaviours of concern

- Student engagement, regular attendance and appropriate behaviour are encouraged through the implementation of *SWPBS* strategies and are supported through universal and individualised support when required (e.g. *Tier 3 supports*).
- Actions and consequences are incremental (a staged response) and will be applied fairly and consistently. See the *ERS Behaviour Response Continuum* for more information.
- Positive reinforcement is instrumental in our approach to supporting student engagement.
- Actions and consequences that isolate or exclude a student from learning are **not to be used**.

The following whole-school and classroom practices outline our philosophy of actions and consequences:

- Predictable and structured classrooms and school environments
- Student participation in the development of classroom expectations regarding student behaviour
- Personalised (individualised) student learning programs documented in IEP's
- Acknowledgement of students through tangible and intangible praise:
 - Natural verbal and social reinforcement
 - School-wide Token Acknowledgement System
 - Student award certificates at assemblies
 - Newsletter articles where appropriate
- *SWPBS* strategies

- A commitment to de-escalating situations in which students are displaying undesirable behaviours

Procedures for ongoing undesirable behaviour

When an ongoing problem becomes apparent, the following steps should be followed:

1. Information recorded on Sentral and notify leadership.
2. Staff may invite an Engagement and Wellbeing team member to observe the student in the classroom (*ERS SWPBS and Engagement and Wellbeing Team Referral*).
3. The parent / carer should be contacted.
4. Support should be provided by the Engagement and Wellbeing team (e.g. follow up on the *ERS Engagement and Wellbeing Team Referral*).
5. A behaviour support meeting should be held in collaboration with the parents / carers and the Engagement and Wellbeing team, if appropriate, Engagement and Wellbeing to develop a *SP* or a *BSP*. All plans will include a review date in order to evaluate the effectiveness of the plan.
6. All plans should be signed off by the SWPBS Learning Specialist, the teacher and the parent / carer.
7. Plans will be shared with all relevant staff.
8. The strategies outlined in the plan will be implemented consistently, and monitored with the collection of data.

This process is outlined in the *ERS SWPBS and EW Behaviour Support Process Flowchart*.

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 Eastern Ranges School 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.

7. Engaging with families

Eastern Ranges 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 and/or Sentral
- maintaining an open, respectful line of communication between parents and staff
- 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 through School Council

- coordinating resources and services from the community for families
- including families in Student Support Groups and developing individual plans for students.
- Providing information sessions for families.

Please also refer to the *ERS Home Behaviour Matrix* which may be used by families to reinforce expected behaviours at home that are consistent with school.

8. Evaluation

Eastern Ranges 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
- incidents data
- school reports
- parent survey
- case management
- Tiered Fidelity Inventory data
- ATOSS data
- SWPBS Self-Assessment Survey Data
- CASES21, including attendance and absence data
- EduSafe

Eastern Ranges 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/or Sentral
- Included in staff induction processes

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

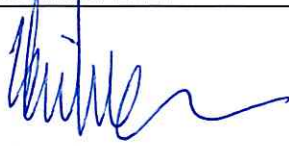
Related policies including:

- *Statement of Values and School Philosophy*
- *Bullying Prevention*
- *Child Safe Standards*

POLICY REVIEW AND APPROVAL

Policy last reviewed	November 2025
Consultation	School Council

Approved by	Principal
Next scheduled review date	November 2027



26/2/26