# INTRODUCTION

## DEFINITION

Student engagement can be defined as three interrelated components: behavioural, emotional and cognitive.

**Behavioural engagement** refers to students’ participation in education, including the academic, social and extracurricular activities of the school.

**Emotional engagement** encompasses students’ emotional reactions in the classroom and in the school and measures a student’s sense of belonging or connectedness to the school.

**Cognitive engagement** relates to a student’s investment in learning and their intrinsic motivation and self-regulation.

## RATIONALE

The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development is committed to providing safe, secure and high quality learning and development opportunities for every student in all Victorian schools. These students can only reach their full educational potential when they are happy, healthy and safe, and when there is a positive school culture that is fair and respectful to engage and support their learning.

## PURPOSE

To relate to and be consistent with the ‘Effective Schools are Engaging Schools: Student Engagement Policy Guidelines’,

In areas such as the encouragement of educational achievement and excellence, prevention of absences and inappropriate behaviour

- To foster a healthy school culture in which high levels of achievement take place within a positive social environment through engagement
- To provide students with a safe learning environment where the risk of harm is minimised and students feel physically and emotionally secure
- To provide support for individual circumstances when a student begins to disengage from their learning, when regular attendance is not consistent or positive behaviours are not demonstrated
- To maximise student learning opportunities and performance through engagement
- To provide genuine opportunities for student/parent participation and student/parent voice
- To build a school environment based on positive behaviours and values
- To provide prevention (cognitive, behavioural and emotional) and intervention for all students at risk
### SECTION 1:

**SCHOOL PROFILE**

#### Social:

Preston Primary School was established in 1875. It is a school with a rich and proud history of state education. In the 1950s it was one of the largest schools in the State. In previous times it has also been known as Tyler Street Primary.

Preston Primary is unique in that it is a multi site school. Student enrolments have risen from 511 in 2003 up to 720 in 2010. This significant increase led School Council to investigate and then apply for an enrolment ceiling of 700. The ceiling came into effect in 2008. Prep and Grade One children are located at the Bowden Street site with Grade Two to Grade Six students at the Tyler Street site.

Preston places great emphasis on academic outcomes and as such is a high performing school. In our last two school reviews we have been in *Negotiated* category, this puts us in the top category of performing schools in the state. We consistently perform above state benchmarks in all areas.

Preston Primary puts emphasis on as small as possible straight grades; we currently have an average of 20 students per grade across the school. The allocation of resources has been directed at employment of classroom teachers to enable us to maintain these small classes. Our commitment to small classes ensures the best possible basis upon which to build further learning.

#### Educational:

At present there are 35 classroom teachers supported by 10 specialist teachers who provide a very structured and broad curriculum. There is a comprehensive Physical Education program which includes two specialist sessions a week in years prep to three and an inclusive sport program for years 4 to 6. Due to the size of the school we enter two teams in all interschool sports. Our interschool sporting teams regularly make it through to district, regional and zone levels. Italian is offered as a Language Other Than English.

The school has made a commitment to the development of The Arts. We have embedded the Arts into the fabric of the school. The Arts is about students developing new skills, in Visual and Performing Arts. An annual highlight of the school calendar is the Art Show which showcases all of the Arts programs including visual art, dance, drama and music. Students are exposed to each of the elements of the Arts Program throughout the year. This allows them to experience new activities and opportunities to develop their sense of self.

The school believes its curriculum leaders should be classroom based modeling from the front. The school is organized into grade level teams. The teams work closely together to plan all aspects of the curriculum. Each level has a representative on the schools management group. The non teaching staff is led by the Business Manager who is a member of the management group.

Preston Primary is passionate about education and is determined to be a school that children love to attend, where the staff is proud to work and the aspirations of parents are met. Embedded in the culture of the school is the ethos that every child should be challenged and encouraged to reach their full potential.
Technological:
- Preston Primary School has identified the need to bring about significant changes to embed 21st century learning skills into all programs
- The school currently has a ratio of 1:5 computers to students
- Banks of notebook computers have been purchased for the Grade 5 & 6 areas in 2008 and Grades 3 & 4 in 2010
- Significant upgrades of ICT infrastructure have been completed in recent years.

Environmental:
- Playgrounds at both sites have had significant recent upgrades
- Artificial turf has been laid at the senior school which has significantly increased useable play and teaching space for PE.
- A covered outdoor learning area (COLA) has been erected at the senior school which allows for the whole school to meet
- All spaces including the Multi-purpose Room, staffroom and office areas are now heated and cooled
- The Junior School is currently being rebuilt as part of the BER program
- Storage areas are limited

SECTION 2: WHOLE SCHOOL PREVENTION

At Preston Primary School our positive school culture is predicated on student engagement being the basis for learning. To support this, our leadership team is actively engaged in developing classroom practice to ensure that our pedagogy and curriculum engages all students. Effective teaching, inclusive and engaging curriculum and respectful relationships between staff and students is promoted through learning circles and professional learning teams that encourage innovative pedagogy developed using the Departments E5 instructional model and VELS.

Opportunities that contribute to the school and effectively engage students in their learning are:
- Student Leadership programs such as: Junior School Council and other roles of responsibility provide opportunities for students to influence change within the school community.
- Student Leadership is encouraged by participation in the National Young Leaders Day held at the Melbourne Convention Centre.
- The school provides multiple opportunities for proactively engaging parents/carers and the wider community to be involved in the school’s programs such as classroom helpers, excursions and Parents Group
- Intervening early to identify/respond to student needs for social and emotional support.
- Recognising and responding to the diverse needs of our students through the PSD Support program.
- Adaption of current pedagogical knowledge and thinking to engage students in meaningful learning experiences.
- Students are encouraged to achieve full attendance to maximise their ability to learn and our teachers’ ability to teach effectively.
- Professional learning for teachers is given high priority to ensure strategies and approaches are adopted and implemented.
SECTION 3: RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act (2006) outlines a vision of human rights for all Victorians. The charter affirms that all people are born free and equal in dignity and rights. While the charter demands equality for all, it also emphasis’s the value of difference. The charter requires public authorities, including government schools and their employees to act compatibly with human rights and to consider them when making decisions and delivering services.

The following legislation needs to be considered when determining rights and responsibilities of all members of the school community:

4. Education and Training Reform Act 2006
5. Education Act 1958

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Anti bullying and Cyber bullying policy</th>
<th>Anaphylaxis policy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Uniform policy</td>
<td>Privacy policy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medication policy</td>
<td>Sunsmart policy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heights Safety policy</td>
<td>Sport policy</td>
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<tr>
<td>Asthma policy</td>
<td>Healthy Living Policy</td>
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<tr>
<td>Emergency Management policy</td>
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<td>Head-lice policy</td>
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<td>Homework Policy</td>
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<tr>
<td>Occupational Health and Safety policy</td>
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</table>

At Preston Primary School we expect high standards of student behaviour based on cooperation, mutual responsibility and self discipline. We promote positive, non-discriminatory relationships among students, parents, staff and the wider community.

WHOLE SCHOOL:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rights</th>
<th>Responsibilities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To be free of harassment</td>
<td>To ensure others are not harassed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To receive support in difficult situations from the school community</td>
<td>To provide support to each other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To be valued and treated with respect</td>
<td>Build positive relationships with the school community</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**STUDENTS:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rights</th>
<th>Responsibilities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To work and play without interference</td>
<td>To allow others to work and play without interference</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>To report bullying to an adult</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To be treated fairly and courteously</td>
<td>To be polite, courteous and well mannered</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To learn in a secure environment</td>
<td>To allow others to learn</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**STAFF:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rights</th>
<th>Responsibilities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To be treated with respect by students,</td>
<td>To treat students in a way that develops self-esteem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>parents and peers</td>
<td>To communicate positively with parents and peers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To expect students to follow the Engagement</td>
<td>To follow the Engagement Guidelines.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guidelines</td>
<td>To use logical consequences and restorative practices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>To provide a Duty of Care to students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>To keep records of significant disciplinary actions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To expect students to learn</td>
<td>To assist students to learn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>To provide an inclusive and differentiated curriculum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>To ensure all students achieve success</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>To communicate student progress to parents</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**PARENTS:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rights</th>
<th>Responsibilities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To expect that their child will be</td>
<td>Ensure students attend school and have the</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>educated in a secure environment in which</td>
<td>appropriate learning materials and attitude</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>care, courtesy and respect for the rights</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>of others are encouraged</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To be contacted when their child</td>
<td>Promote respectful relationships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>continually disregards the School Engagement Policy or is involved in a major incident</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
SECTION 4: SHARED EXPECTATIONS

Preston Primary School has developed shared expectations to ensure that the learning, safety and rights of all are respected. The expectations are intended to be positive in that they set out what is expected and appropriate behaviours for our school community. Our shared expectations are intended to support individual students and families that come to our community from a diversity of backgrounds, communities and experiences.

STAFF ENGAGEMENT

The school leadership team will:
• uphold the right of every child to receive an education up to the compulsory age of schooling
• ensure the school complies with its duty of care obligations to each student as well as its obligations under the equal opportunity and human rights legislation
• identify the diversity of the school community and deliver teaching and learning, educational and extra-curricular activities and community services inclusive and responsive to student needs.

The staff will:
• develop flexible pedagogical styles to engage different learners
• deliver curriculum and assessment that challenges and extends students learning
• develop positive relationships with students that promote engagement, wellbeing and learning
• provide opportunities for student voice developing a positive school culture

ATTENDANCE

In compliance with Departmental procedures school staff will;
• promote regular attendance with all members of the school community and;
• monitor and follow up on absences

BEHAVIOUR

Preston Primary School will support and promote positive behaviours by developing and implementing shared behavioural expectations with the school community through a staged response.

The school leadership team will;
• lead and promote preventative approaches to behavioural issues
• monitor the profile of behaviour issues at the school and the effectiveness of implemented strategies
• provide professional development for staff to build their capacity to promote positive behaviours.

The staff will;
• use Student Engagement policy as a basis for negotiating class-based shared expectations with students
• teach students social competencies through curriculum content and pedagogical approach
• employ behaviour management strategies that reflect the behaviours expected from students
• build a collegiate atmosphere with other school staff to share strategies and support each other to reflect on one’s own behaviour management approach.
**Student Engagement**
All students are expected to:
- respect, value and learn from the differences of others;
- have high expectations that they can learn;
- reflect on and learn from their own differences;

**Attendance**
All students are expected to come to school every school day throughout the year. (If students cannot attend their parents/carer must provide a suitable explanation to the school).

**Behaviour**
All students will:
- Support each other’s learning by behaving in a way that is curious and respectful
- have high expectations that they can learn
- be considerate and supportive of others
- demonstrate behaviour and attitudes that support the wellbeing and learning for all and contributes to a positive environment that safe, inclusive and happy
- understand that bullying, including cyber-bullying, violence, property damage, inappropriate language and disrupting the learning of other students is unacceptable

**Parents/Carers Engagement**
- Parents/carers are expected to support the school’s efforts to educate young people to live in a diverse world by promoting an understanding and appreciation of diversity in the home
- Parents/carers should also help the school to provide student-centred responses by providing all relevant information to the school
- Parents/carers are encouraged to actively participate in supporting their child’s learning by building a positive relationship with the school
- Parents/carers will work with the school through attendance at parent-teacher meetings and responding to communications in a timely manner

**Attendance**
Parents/carers are expected to ensure that enrolment details for their children are correct, that their children attend school regularly and that, when a child is absent from school, parents/carers advise the school as soon as possible.

**Behaviour**
Parents/carers should understand the schools behavioural expectations and aim to provide a consistent approach that supports their child’s learning and engagement in and out of school.
**Section 5: School Actions**

**Attendance**

At Preston Primary School, absences often mean students miss important stages in the development of their learning, causing them to find ‘catching up’ difficult. The following are ways in which we promote school attendance:

- Attendance practices reflect DEECD philosophy of ‘It’s Not OK to be Away’.
- All student absences/lateness are recorded twice a day (morning and afternoon) by teachers, they are aggregated on to our CASES database and communicated to DEECD (refer to Appendix 10 & 11: Student Engagement Policy).
- The school recognises illness as a reasonable ground for an absence.
- Clear written/verbal statements are made regularly to parents/carers/students about school and community attendance expectations
- The Attendance Coordinator will closely monitor student attendance through the evaluation of the following student absence reports on CASES21.
- If within three days of the initial absence parents/carers have not provided an explanation/satisfactory explanation contact will be made by the classroom teacher or nominated representative.
- The Principal or delegates will contact parents of students with high levels of unexplained or unapproved absences/lateness, with the view to developing and implementing strategies to minimise absences (refer to Appendix 6: Student Engagement Policy).
- Ongoing unexplained absences/lateness, or lack of cooperation regarding student attendance will result in a formal attendance conference being organised. This may lead to the establishment of a Student Support Group. This Support Group will be convened by the Principal (or nominee) and attended by key professionals. An Attendance Improvement Plan may be developed (refer to Appendix 7: Student Engagement Policy). Unresolved attendance issues may be reported by the Principal to the Department of Human Services.
- Student attendance figures will appear on the student’s mid-year and end of year reports.
- DEECD and enrolment auditors will be given complete access to all student attendance records if requested.
- Whole-school modelling of punctuality is expected and regularly monitored.
- All absence notes and records of communication will be retained and stored at the school for a minimum period of 12 months.

**Behavioural Consequences**

Students are expected to cooperate:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>To promote cooperation student could choose to:</th>
<th>Cooperation is difficult when a student:</th>
<th>Appropriate responses to minor/initial incidents</th>
<th>Major or Repeated Incidents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Consider other classmate’s needs</td>
<td>Always has to be first</td>
<td>Speak to child</td>
<td>Parents contacted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Think of ways for everyone to have a turn</td>
<td>Refuses to take turns</td>
<td>Student to reflect on the incident (student incident report may be completed)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Encourage everyone to have a say</td>
<td>Ignores the ideas of others</td>
<td>Reflection Sheet may allow opportunity for student to take responsibility for actions and repair damage done to people or property.</td>
<td>Withdrawal of privileges, with explanation of how behaviour impacts our experience</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Major or Repeated Incidents</th>
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</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parents contacted</td>
<td>Withdrawal of privileges, with explanation of how behaviour impacts our experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behaviour management plan</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Support Group</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In school suspension</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>