



School No. 4778 Principal: Angela Dawson

Telephone: 9570 3986 Facsimile: 9579 4423

Homepage: www.valkstoneps.vic.edu.au Email: valkstone.ps@education.vic.gov.au

STUDENT WELLBEING AND ENGAGEMENT POLICY



Help for non-English speakers

If you need help to understand the information in this policy, please contact Valkstone Primary School on 03 9570 3986 or valkstone.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.

Valkstone 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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1. School profile
2. School values, philosophy and vision
3. Wellbeing and engagement strategies
4. Identifying students in need of support
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POLICY

1. School profile

Prior to 1956, the location of Valkstone was a market garden operated by Mr. Vandervalk and his wife, the former Miss Stone. The school's name "Valkstone" was formed from the combination of their surnames. In keeping with Mr. Vandervalk's Dutch background, the school adopted the falcon as its crest, as 'valk' in Dutch means 'falcon'.

On February 7, 1957, the school opened its doors to 317 pupils. With a staff of 10 teachers, the children marched into their classrooms ready to begin Valkstone's school life. The school's success from the beginning was supported by the wonderful contribution of parents.

Valkstone Primary School operates within the Victorian Curriculum framework. The school provides specialist teaching in Art, Music, Physical Education, English as an Additional Language (EAL), Japanese Language, and STEM. The school maintains single-level classes from Foundation through to Grade 6, staffed by caring, committed, and highly skilled teachers who go above and beyond expectations. These educators are dedicated to developing each child's potential through a challenging, personalised curriculum that meets individual student needs.

At the core of Valkstone's approach is the belief that successful teaching and learning stems from teachers and students working together to build inclusive learning environments. The school maintains high standards of public service, demonstrating responsiveness, integrity, impartiality, accountability, respect, and leadership while promoting human rights in their daily operations. People are at the heart of the school, with child safety being the first priority.

The school has developed significant environmental initiatives including a vegetable garden, frog pond, chicken house, and an outdoor learning area. These facilities support hands-on environmental education and student engagement with nature.

Valkstone maintains high expectations for its students, teachers, and parent community. The school actively promotes values of respect, inclusiveness, curiosity, and integrity. The learning environment is designed to foster resilience and develop respectful, responsible citizens. The school aims to provide a challenging and supportive environment that engages all students, equipping them with the skills and knowledge needed to become active and successful members of society.

Teaching team leaders serve as advocates for implementing the strategic plan, guiding staff in innovative approaches and evidence-based practices. These leaders coordinate the curriculum across year levels to support student learning and transitions. They share their passion for maintaining high expectations and ensuring positive impact on student progress. The school maintains open communication with parents through multiple channels, including COMPASS, newsletters, their webpage, and student/school presentations.

2. School values, philosophy and vision

At Valkstone Primary School, we are curious learners, preparing ourselves to thrive in tomorrow's world. We foster a positive school environment focused on student connectedness, relationships, and high expectations. Our school culture is built on active participation from all community members, ensuring everyone feels valued, safe, and supported to reach their full potential.

Our community demonstrates four core values:

Respect: We show consideration. This is demonstrated through courteous interactions, active listening, and care for diversity.

Inclusiveness: We accept and welcome everyone. This ensures every student participates fully in school life regardless of background or circumstances.

Curiosity: We seek to understand. This is nurtured through learning and exploration beyond the standard curriculum.

Integrity: We show our best selves. This means being honest and taking responsibility for actions.

We value active parent involvement in student learning and social development. Communication occurs through regular interviews, reports, phone calls, student diaries, and meetings. Parents are also involved through Student

Support Groups when addressing behavioural concerns.

Our whole-school approach to behaviour management focuses on teaching positive behaviours and using logical consequences. This is supported by our "Respectful Relationships" framework and implemented through assertive discipline and restorative practices. Teachers are empowered to manage classroom interactions effectively to enhance student achievement.

We encourage student voice through leadership opportunities, Junior School Council, student forums, and class meetings. The school implements 'It's Not Okay to be Away' strategies to maintain strong attendance. Our teaching approach is informed by High Impact Teaching Strategies and Literacy and Numeracy Teaching Strategies.

3. Wellbeing and engagement strategies

Universal

Valkstone 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.

Valkstone Primary School strategies include:

- 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, parent survey data, student management data and school level assessment data
- teachers at Valkstone Primary School use the GANAR 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 Valkstone 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
- incorporating our school's Statement of Values into our curriculum and promoting them 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
- acknowledging positive behaviour and student achievement in the classroom, and formally in school assemblies and communication to parents
- monitoring student attendance and implement attendance improvement strategies at a whole-school, cohort and individual level
- students having the opportunity to contribute to and provide feedback on decisions about school operations through the Junior School Council and other forums including year group meetings and Peer Support Groups and student focus groups. Students are also encouraged to speak with their teachers, Year Level Coordinator, Assistant Principal and Principal whenever they have any questions or concerns
- creating opportunities for cross—age connections amongst students through athletics, music programs and peer support programs
- Welcoming and encouraging students to self-refer to the Student Wellbeing Coordinator, Year Group Leaders, school nurse, Assistant Principal and Principal if they would like to discuss a particular issue or feel as though they may need support of any kind.
- engaging in school wide positive behaviour support with our staff and students, which includes programs such as:
 - Respectful Relationships
 - Berry Street Educational approach
 - The Cyber-Safety project and E-Safety

- Interrelate sexual and consent education
- Growth Mindset
- Peer Support
- Programs, incursions and excursions developed to address issue specific behaviour (i.e. bullying prevention, protective behaviours, social skill development)
- opportunities for student inclusion (i.e. sports teams, clubs, recess and lunchtime activities)
- buddy programs and 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

- Valkstone has a tiered approach to Wellbeing. The grade teacher initially deals with any concerns. From there the issues are referred on to the PLT leader and if needed to the Wellbeing Coordinator, Assistant Principal and/or Principal;
- Each year group has a Year Group Leader/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; resources such as DET's [Mental health toolkit or headspace](#) might be used.
- 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.
- 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 through small group intervention support, individual education plans (IEPs).

Individual

- Student Support Group Meetings are scheduled each term for our students under the Disabilities Inclusion Profile. Parents, class teacher, education support teacher, School Wellbeing Coordinator and any allied health professionals are included in this meeting.
- referral to onsite allied health professionals - Occupational Therapy, Speech Therapy and Psychology
- referral to Orange Door
- Navigator attendance support program
- Lookout out-of-home care support
- Individual Learning Plan and Behaviour Support Plan
 - Individual Learning Plans are developed for students who require support for their social emotional and academic learning (below and above expected level). Valkstone IEP Guidebook is to be used to support these plans. [Individual Education Plans](#) to be followed for any students requiring DIP.
 - Behaviour Support Plans are developed to support students who display behaviour that is unacceptable or those who are withdrawn.
 - [Behaviour - Students](#)
- Disability Inclusion Profile
 - With the support of the Department Guidance Officer and Speech Therapist, students are identified and assessments undertaken to determine eligibility for program funds. Evidence is gathered and an application submitted after an Educational Needs Questionnaire Meeting, with parents, is conducted.
 - [Program for Students with Disabilities](#)
- Referral to Student Welfare Coordinator and Student Support Services Teachers are supported in identifying students who require support. Each case is considered by all stakeholders and support is allocated in line with Department Guidelines.
 - [Student Support Services](#)

Valkstone 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; [Behaviour Support Plans](#)
- 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 allied health professionals, Headspace, child and adolescent mental health services

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
- running regular Student Support Group meetings for all students [Student Support Groups:](#)
 - with a disability
 - In Out of Home Care
 - with other complex needs that require ongoing support and monitoring.

4. Mental Health, Suicide and Self-Harm Prevention

Valkstone Primary School implements a proactive approach to mental health and wellbeing through our Wellbeing Curriculum, which incorporates social and personal capabilities. Through the Respectful Relationships program, staff deliver content on Positive Coping and Help Seeking, encouraging students to connect with trusted adults when feeling unhappy, uncomfortable, or unsafe.

The Wellbeing team supports staff in identifying indicators of trauma, family violence, and self-harm. Early intervention strategies include the SafeMinds 'NIP it in the Bud' resources, which guide staff to notice, inquire, and plan for students who may be vulnerable or at risk of emotional distress.

Parents and carers are encouraged to access support resources including the SafeMinds Inquire Tip Sheet for Families and the Beyond Blue Mental Health Checklist. The SafeMinds tip sheet assists parents in conducting mental health conversations with their children, while the Beyond Blue checklist helps identify social, emotional, or behavioral difficulties in children aged four to sixteen.

Students identified as at risk are referred to the Wellbeing Coordinator (Assistant Principal). Support measures may include:

- Student Support Group meetings with families
- Referrals to DET's Student Support Services
- Referrals to DHHS
- Referrals to Alfred Health's Child and Youth Mental Health Service
- Development of a Safety Plan when required

5. Identifying students in need of support

Valkstone 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 to help identify students in need of support and enhance student wellbeing. Valkstone 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 data
- engagement with families
- self-referrals or referrals from peers

6. 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 'Respectful Relationships' document highlights the rights and responsibilities of members of our community.

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 and other related policies.

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; and
- 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.

7. Student behavioural expectations

Behavioural expectations of students, staff and families are grounded in our school's 'Respectful Relationships' document. Student bullying behaviour will be responded to consistently with Valkstone Primary school's Bullying Prevention policy and Incident Analysis and Response documentation.

When a student acts in breach of the behaviour standards of our school community, Valkstone Primary School will institute a staged response, consistent with the Department's Student Engagement and Inclusion Guidelines. Where appropriate, parents will be informed about the inappropriate behaviour and the disciplinary action taken by teachers and other school staff.

Valkstone Primary School considers, explores and implement positive and non-punitive interventions to support student behaviour before considering disciplinary measures such as 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
- withdrawal of privileges
- referral to the Year Level Coordinator
- referral to the Wellbeing Coordinator, Assistant principal or Principal
- restorative practices

- detentions
- parental involvement
- behaviour reviews
- 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 Valkstone 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.

8. Engaging with families

Valkstone 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
- 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

9. Including families in Student Support Groups and developing individual plans for students. Evaluation

Valkstone 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
- incidents data
- school reports
- parent survey
- case management
- CASES21, including attendance and absence data
- SOCS

Valkstone 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
- Included in staff induction processes

Our school will also ensure it follows the mandatory parent/carers 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](#)

POLICY REVIEW AND APPROVAL

Policy last reviewed	March 2025
Consultation	School council
Approved by	Principal
Next scheduled review date	March 2027