

STUDENT WELLBEING AND ENGAGEMENT POLICY



Help for non-English speakers

If you need help to understand the information in this policy, please contact Gembrook Primary School Office.

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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, supportive and inclusive learning environment for students
- (b) expectations for positive student behaviour
- (c) support is available to students and families
- (d) our school's policies and procedures for responding to inappropriate student behaviour.

Gembrook 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 (onsite and offsite), including camps and excursions.

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POLICY

1. School profile

Gembrook Primary School was established in 1883 and is located in the semi-rural township of Gembrook on the eastern side of the Dandenong Ranges. It is approximately 60kms from Melbourne.

The current enrolment for the school is approximately 251 students enrolled from foundation (Prep) to grade 6, and 33 school staff members including one wellbeing officer.

The socio-economic profile was listed as medium high in the recent performance summary. There are currently three Language Background Other Than English (LBOTE) students and 5 Koori students at the school. There are 11 students presently funded under the Disability Inclusion Program. The school has 12 grades in three learning centres. A comprehensive classroom and specialist program provide a rich learning environment for the students. A range of intervention and extension programs are provided.

The school's Library is located in the heritage building. The three main learning centres are modern, flexible learning areas, which incorporate technology, televisions, iPads and laptops. The school buildings feature energy efficient technology for lighting, heating and cooling. Rainwater is harvested in water tanks. Solar panels are used to provide the majority of the energy for school operations. The large school grounds include open grassy areas and playgrounds with a range of play equipment. There is also a vegetable garden and small orchard. Most of our students that attend our school live locally and tend to walk, ride their bike, or catch the school bus to and from school. Gembrook Primary School has developed close ties to the local community and enjoys support from our local shops and community services.

Gembrook Primary School strives for excellence in teaching and learning, in order to achieve the best possible student learning outcomes. We strive to provide a nurturing and challenging environment that empowers students to reach their personal best, both academically and socially.

Gembrook Primary School has developed and implemented a whole school approach to planning, teaching and assessment across all areas of the curriculum. The school focuses on developing the capacity of staff through targeted professional learning and reflective practices. The school will continue to strengthen the whole school developmental approach to the teaching and learning.

The school encourages community involvement by providing multiple opportunities for parents/carers, and members of the broader community to play an active role in many areas of the school. The school supports families to engage in their child's learning and to build their capacity as active and engaged learners. Parents/carers and other community members are invited to participate in many aspects of school life.

The school recognises that student wellbeing and welfare impacts the engagement of students. Gembrook Primary School recognises that school connectedness impacts effective student learning.

Student engagement is defined as:

- Behavioural engagement – a student's participation in education, including academic, social and extra-curricular activities at the school.
- Emotional engagement – a student's emotional reactions in the classroom and in the school, a sense of belonging and connectedness.
- Cognitive engagement – a student's investment in learning and their intrinsic motivation and self-regulation.

2. School values, mission and vision

VISION

Gembrook Primary School's vision is to provide every student with every opportunity to be the best they can be.

MISSION

Gembrook Primary School's mission statement is *A View To The Future* - Gembrook Primary School is a vibrant and aspirational education community that provides a safe and supportive learning environment which enables a personalised, engaging and challenging learning program.

VALUES

Gembrook Primary School's community vision is underpinned by the values of RESPECT & HIGH EXPECTATIONS, and supported through the skills of persistence; confidence, resilience and getting along.

The school values of Respect and High expectations encompass the Australian Government's nine values, for Australian schools, which are:

- **Care and Compassion**
Care for self and others
- **Integrity**
Act in accordance with principles of moral and ethical conduct, ensure consistency between words and deeds.
- **Doing Your Best**
Seek to accomplish something worthy and admirable, try hard, pursue excellence.
- **Respect** Treat others with consideration and regard, respect another person's point of view.
- **Fair Go**
Pursue and protect the common good where all people are treated fairly for a just society.
- **Responsibility**
Be accountable for one's own actions, resolve differences in constructive, non-violent and peaceful ways, contribute to society and to civic life, take care of the environment.
- **Freedom**
Enjoy all the rights and privileges of Australian citizenship free from unnecessary interference or control, and stand up for the rights of others.
- **Understanding, Tolerance and Inclusion**
Be aware of others and their cultures, accept diversity within a democratic society, being included and including others.
- **Honesty and Trustworthiness**
Be honest, sincere and seek the truth.

Our Statement of Values and School Mission available online at:
www.gembrookps.vic.edu.au/wp/index.php/philosophy/

3. Wellbeing and engagement strategies

Gembrook 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

- Whole school engagement in the School Wide Positive Behaviour Support framework (PBL – Positive Behaviour for Learning).
- Whole school community engagement in the Respectful Relationships initiative.
- 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, Bullying Survey
- Teachers at Gembrook Primary School use the Gradual Release of Responsibility and the Workshop Model as the instructional frameworks 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 Gembrook 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 and the Victorian Curriculum.
- 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, formally in school assemblies and communicated to parents through awards, Compass Chronicles, and direct phone calls.
- Monitor student attendance and implement attendance improvement strategies at a whole-school, cohort and individual level.
- Students have the opportunity to contribute to and provide feedback on decisions about school operations through the Student Representative Council and other forums including three-way conferences, IEP meetings and student/teacher conferences.
- All students are welcome to approach the Student Wellbeing Officer, teachers and education support staff, designated teacher for out of home care students and Maarrung Leader for Koori students, Assistant Principal and Principal if they would like to discuss a particular issue or feel as though they may need support of any kind. We are proud to have an 'open door' policy where students and staff are partners in learning.
- Create opportunities for cross—age connections amongst students through school productions, athletic events, electives and buddy programs.
- Programs, incursions and excursions developed to address issue specific needs or behaviour

- Opportunities for student inclusion including sports teams, clubs, recess, and lunchtime activities.

Targeted

- Each learning centre has a team leader, and the school has a Wellbeing Officer who monitor the health and wellbeing of students in their learning centre, and act as a point of contact for students who may need additional support.
- Koori 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 – each student is connected with the Maarrung Leader, school Wellbeing Officer, IEP with a cultural goal and termly SSG meetings.
- Any of 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.
- We support learning and wellbeing outcomes of any students from refugee background through DE support programs.
- 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](#)
- All students in Out of Home Care are supported in accordance with the Department of Education's policy on [Supporting Students in Out-of-Home Care](#) including being appointed a Learning Mentor, a designated teacher, having an IEP and a termly SSG meeting and being referred to Student Support Services for Educational Needs Assessments.
- Students with a disability are supported to be able to engage fully in their learning and school activities in accordance with the Department of Education's policy on [Students with Disability](#), such as through reasonable adjustments to support access to learning programs, consultation with families through termly SSG meetings and IEP.
- Wellbeing and health staff will undertake health promotion and social skills development in response to needs identified by student wellbeing data, classroom teachers or other school staff each year.
- Staff will apply a trauma-informed approach to working with students who have experienced trauma including Respectful Relationship knowledge.
- Teachers and staff follow the Wellbeing Scope and Sequence developed to link the Victorian Curriculum areas of inclusion, bullying, cyber bullying, respectful relationships, life education, first aid training, sexuality education, consent and personal safety programs.
- The school community is encouraged to identify, report and address inappropriate and harmful behaviours such as racism, homophobia and other forms of discrimination or harassment.

Individual

- Semester One – Getting to Know You interviews (student, parent and teacher)
- Semester Two – Three-Way Conferences (student, parent, teacher)
- Student Support Group meetings (for funded students, Out of Home Care students and Koori students)
- Individual Education Plans and meetings each semester
- Behaviour Support Plans
- Student Safety Plans
- Disability Inclusion Support funding
- Student Support Services referrals
- Referrals to School Wellbeing Officer

- Individual attendance data monitoring
- End of year teacher-to-teacher handover meetings

Gembrook 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 ChildFirst.
 - 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 Plan in collaboration with the student and their family.
- Engaging with our regional Koori 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

Gembrook Primary School is committed to providing the necessary support to ensure our students are supported intellectually, emotionally and socially. The staff at Gembrook Primary School play a significant role in developing and implementing strategies to help identify students in need of support and enhance student wellbeing.

Gembrook 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

- Individual student or peer recognition of the need for support

5. Rights and responsibilities

At Gembrook Primary School, student well-being is at all times the shared responsibility of staff, students and parents. It is the right of all members of the school community to experience a safe, pleasant and supportive learning and teaching environment. Staff, students and parents/carers have a right to be treated with respect and enjoy an environment free from bullying, harassment, violence, discrimination or intimidation.

- A *right* is something that belongs to you and cannot be taken away by anyone. All students, teachers and parents have rights.
- A *responsibility* is something that you should do without being prompted. Some of these things you do for others and some you do for yourself.

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

Students have the right to:	Students have the responsibility to:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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.

Teachers

Teachers have the right to:	Teachers have the responsibility to:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be informed, within privacy requirements, about matters relating to students that may impact on their teaching and student learning • Feel safe, secure and happy at school • Teach in an environment free from bullying, harassment, violence, racism, discrimination or intimidation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrate the standards set by the Victorian Institute of Teaching, Victorian Curriculum, and Gembrook Primary School whole school practice. • Understand how students learn and how to teach them effectively, know the content they teach, know their students, plan and assess for effective learning

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • express their ideas, feelings and concerns. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create and maintain safe and challenging learning environments • Use a range of strategies to engage students in effective learning. • Fairly and consistently implement the Student Engagement and Wellbeing Policy. • Maintain confidentiality in accordance with all DE policies
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Parents

Parents have the right to:	Parents have the responsibility to:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • participate in their child's education • expect confidentiality maintained, in accordance with all DE policies • express their ideas, feelings and concerns, in regards to their child's learning and wellbeing. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • take an active interest in their child's educational progress, model and reinforce positive behaviours • Ensure their child's regular attendance • Support the school in maintaining a safe and respectful learning environment for all students and staff • Engage in regular, constructive and respectful communication with school staff regarding their child's learning. • Share critical health and wellbeing information with relevant staff members • Ensure they stay informed of school operations/activities through regular interactions with Compass, school notices and newsletters

6. Student behavioural expectations and Management

The Positive Behaviours for Learning (PBL) framework ensures behavioural expectations are taught to all students by all staff and school-wide systems are developed to acknowledge and promote expected behaviour and to discourage inappropriate behaviour.

Student engagement, regular attendance and positive behaviours will be supported through relationship based whole-school and classroom practices, including:

- Establishing predictable, fair and democratic classrooms and school environments.
- Ensuring student participation in the development of classroom and whole school expectations.
- Providing personalised learning programs where appropriate for individual students.
- Consistently acknowledging all students.
- Empowering students by creating multiple opportunities for them to take responsibility and be involved in decision-making.
- Providing physical environments conducive to positive behaviours and effective engagement in learning.

- Classroom 'Steps for Success' ladder.
- Awarding 'Gem Chips' in accordance with our PBL statements.
- Positive Behaviours for Learning Compass Chronicles.
- Awards at school assemblies.
- Contact parents regarding student extended absences and unexplained daily absences.

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. Where appropriate, parents will be informed about the inappropriate behaviour and the disciplinary action taken by teachers and other school staff.

Inappropriate behaviours, including irregular attendance, will be responded to through a staged response, including:

- Understanding the student's background and needs.
- Ensuring a clear understanding of expectations by students, parents and teachers.
- Providing consistent school and classroom environments.
- Scaffolding the students' learning program.
- Restorative practices – see below.
- Following the agreed School Student Management flow chart.
- Use of the classroom 'Steps for Success' ladder for classroom management.
- Use of PBL statements
- Use of incident reporting using PBL and Compass

Gembrook Primary School use a combination of the following strategies:

- Involving and supporting the parents/carers.
- Involving the teacher, developing and managing individual pathways.
- Specialist sessions and intervention, which may include counsellors, speech therapists, occupational therapists, or wellbeing officer.
- Convening Student Support Group meetings; the Student Support Group is an important component of the staged response for students facing difficulty with engagement, academic performance, attendance or behaviour.
- Developing individualised flexible learning, behaviour or attendance plans.
- Providing broader educational programs; for example, experiential learning, camps/outdoor education/creative arts.
- Involving community support agencies.
- 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 – see below.
- Withdrawal of privileges.
- Restricted playtimes.
- Referral to the Assistant Principal or Principal.
- Behaviour reviews.
- Suspension.
- Expulsion.

Restorative Practices

The school is committed to the use of restorative practices with students. Restorative Practices:

- Are underpinned by student learning and facilitate an environment of safety, trust and connectedness.
- Promote awareness of others, responsibility and empathy.
- Involve direct and voluntary participation of those affected by misconduct in its resolution.
- Promote relationship management, rather than behaviour management: “separate the deed from the doer”.
- Are systematic, not situational.
- Are concerned with establishing or re-establishing social equality in relationships; that is, relationships in which each person’s rights to equal dignity, concern and respect are satisfied.

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.

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 Gembrook 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

Gembrook 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 Communication Policy.
- Providing parent volunteer opportunities so that families can contribute to school activities.
- Involving families with learning 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

Gembrook 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. Data will be regularly

monitored to ensure any wellbeing or engagement issues are acted upon in a timely manner and any intervention occurs as soon as possible.

Sources of data that will be assessed on an annual basis include:

- Student survey data
- Incident data
- School reports
- Parent survey
- Incident Support Operation Centre (ISOC) Report
- Case management
- CASES21, including attendance and absence data

9. COMMUNICATION

This policy will be communicated to our school community in the following ways

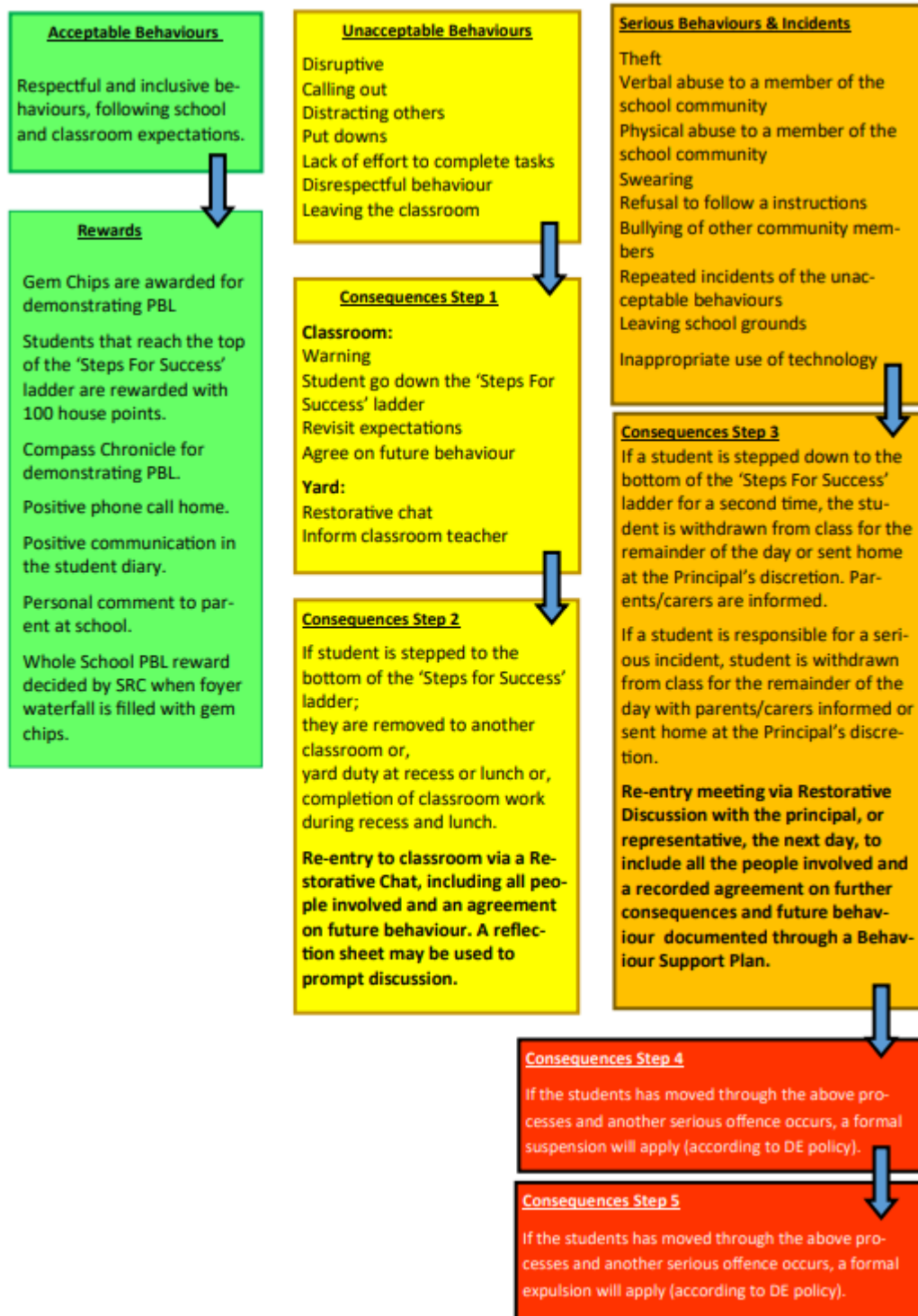
- Available publicly on our school's website
- Included in staff induction processes
- Included as annual reference in school newsletter
- Made available in hard copy from school administration upon request

Our school will also ensure it follows the mandatory parent/carers notification requirements with respect to suspensions and expulsions outlined in the Department's policies at:

- [Suspension process](#)
- [Expulsions - Decision](#)

10. BEHAVIOUR MANAGEMENT FLOW CHART

Gembrook Primary School Behaviour Management Flow Chart



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	May 2023
Consultation	School Council May 2023 School community Staff
Approved by	Principal
Next scheduled review date	May 2025