



PURPOSE

This policy provides guidelines for Aurora School and Aurora School Community Kindergarten to:

- ensure the service and school environment is safe, inclusive and empowering for children, families, early childhood teachers, educators, staff, volunteers and visitors
- embed social and emotional learning in the educational program
- ensure families, children, early childhood teachers, educators and staff are key partners in mental health initiatives
- engage in partnerships with community networks.
- Policies and procedures for responding to inappropriate behaviour (DE, Student Wellbeing Engagement policy 2022)



POLICY STATEMENT

VALUES

Aurora School and Aurora School Community Kindergarten is committed to:

- supporting children becoming strong in their social, emotional and spiritual wellbeing
- strengthening early childhood teachers and educators understanding of the importance of wellbeing and are sensitive to the impact of abuse and trauma on children
- providing an educational program where children are supported to explore, learn and engage with health and wellbeing
- creating an environment that supports, reflects and promotes positive social, emotional and spiritual wellbeing

SCOPE

This policy applies to the approved provider, persons with management or control, nominated supervisor, persons in day-to-day charge, early childhood teachers, educators, staff, students, volunteers, parents/guardians, children, and others attending the programs and activities of Aurora School and Aurora School Community Kindergarten, including during offsite excursions and activities.

RESPONSIBILITIES	Approved provider and persons with management or control	Nominated supervisor and persons in day-to-day charge	Early childhood teacher, educators and all other staff	Parents/guardians	Contractors, volunteers and students	Aurora School
R indicates legislation requirement, and should not be deleted						
Ensuring that the nominated supervisor, early childhood teachers, educators, staff, families and children are active participants in the development and implementation of the whole service and school <i>Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy</i>	R					√
Ensuring that the service and school provides a safe, inclusive and empowering environment which celebrates diversity through positive, respectful and appropriate behaviour when working with children and families (<i>refer to Code of Conduct Policy and Interactions with Children Policy</i>)	R	√	√		√	√
Actively supporting and facilitating participation and inclusion of Aboriginal children, young people, and their families at Aurora School and Aurora School Community Kindergarten	R	√	√		√	√
Encouraging children to actively consider risks within the service and school, and involving them in the development of guidelines to keep the service and school environment healthy and safe for all		√	√		√	√
Embedding social and emotional learning in the service and school program and practice, and teaching children to care for their own mental health and wellbeing	R	√	√		√	√
Embedding opportunities to learn about healthy eating and oral health and the importance of physical activity in the educational program, throughout the year (<i>refer to Nutrition, Oral Health and Active Play policy</i>)	R	√	√		√	√
Ensuring that quiet and reflective spaces are provided for children, educators and families.	√	√	√		√	√
Ensuring diversity, cultural practices and mental health and wellbeing practices are considered when implementing the learning program at the service and school	R	√	√		√	√
Implementing appropriate programs and practices to support vulnerable children and families, including working co-operatively with relevant service and school s and/or professionals, where required (<i>refer to Child Safe Environment and Wellbeing</i>)	R	√	√		√	√

Ensuring a safe, inclusive, welcoming environment is created for all community members. There is a culture of respect, fairness and equity.	R	√	√		√	√
Encouraging collaborative, family-centred practice (<i>refer to Definitions</i>) at the service and school which facilitates the positive mental health and wellbeing and active participation of both the child and the family at the service and school		√	√		√	√
Ensuring that cultural values and expectations about health and wellbeing are respected		√	√		√	√
Ensuring that children's diverse circumstances are understood, and those who are vulnerable are responded to and provided with support		√	√		√	√
Understanding each child's unique developmental journey of which mental health being a continuum will be different to others in their space		√	√		√	√
Attending to any adjustments to provide equal protection for all children (<i>refer to Child Safe Environment and Wellbeing Policy</i>)	R	√	√	√	√	√
Strategies are used to promote positive and responsible behaviour, and to prevent and respond to hurtful and unsafe behaviour (<i>refer to Child Safe Environment and Wellbeing Policy</i>)	R	√	√		√	√
Educators and staff model respectful interactions with each other, children and families. A positive approach to mental health and wellbeing is also role modelled (<i>refer to Interaction with Children policy</i>)			√	√	√	√
Children are supported to develop social and emotional skills and learn about and care for their own mental health (<i>refer to Curriculum Development policy</i>)			√	√	√	√
Educators and staff are supported to access ongoing professional development and resources about mental health and wellbeing education and to understand when and how to refer children to additional support (<i>refer to Sources</i>)		√	√			√
Educators and staff are supported to learn about and care for their own mental health and wellbeing (<i>refer to Occupational Health and Safety policy</i>)	R	√				√
Ensuring mental health and wellbeing information and policy requirements are included in educator and staff orientation/induction.		√	√			√
Ensuring leadership practices and on-the-ground support, enable a work environment that minimises stress and promotes mental health and wellbeing for educators and staff.		√	√			√
Implementing strategies to promote positive conflict resolution and to prevent and respond to bullying, discrimination and harassment (<i>refer to Compliments and Complaints policy</i>)	R	√				√

Providing mental health and wellbeing information to families and the wider community, such as information about local support service and schools and resources about social and emotional learning	√	√				√
Establishing partnerships with relevant organisations and health professionals to support mental health and wellbeing practices where appropriate.	√	√	√		√	√
Ensuring there are clear referral options and pathways for children, staff, educators and families to access support service and schools for mental health and wellbeing (<i>refer to Sources</i>).	√	√	√	√	√	√
Ensuring that the nominated supervisor, early childhood teachers, educators, staff and families are provided with information about policy requirements, with opportunities to provide feedback and input	√	√	√	√	√	√
Taken from DE, Student Wellbeing Engagement policy 2022						
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 Example school adopt a broad range of teaching and assessment approaches to effectively respond to the diverse learning styles, strengths and needs of our students and follow the standards set by the Victorian Institute of Teaching						√
our school's Statement of Values and School Philosophy are incorporated into our curriculum and promoted to students, staff and parents so that they are shared and celebrated as the foundation of our school community						√
carefully planned transition programs to support students moving into different stages of their schooling						√
create opportunities for cross—age connections through connections with external schools and organisations		√	√			√
we engage in school wide positive behaviour support with our staff and students, which includes programs such as: Respectful Relationships Zones of Regulation						√
all students in Out of Home Care are supported in accordance with the Department's policy on Supporting Students in Out-of-Home Care including being appointed a Learning Mentor, having an Individual Learning Plan and a Student Support Group (SSG) and being referred to Student Support Services for an Educational Needs Assessment						√

staff will apply a trauma-informed approach to working with students who have experienced trauma						√
We support families and children through: <u>Student Support Groups</u> <u>Individual Education Plans</u> <u>Behaviour - Students</u> <u>Behaviour Support Plans</u>						√
building constructive relationships with children at risk or children who are vulnerable due to complex individual circumstances						√
developing an Individual Learning Plan and/or a Behaviour Support Plan						√
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						√
engaging with our regional Koorie Engagement Support Officers						√
We work hard to create successful partnerships with parents and carers by: Ensuring that all parents have access to our school policies and procedures, available on our school website maintaining an open, respectful line of communication between parents and staff, supported by our Communicating with School Staff policy. providing parent volunteer opportunities so that families can contribute to school activities involving families with curriculum-related activities involving families in school decision making coordinating resources and services from the community for families						√



BACKGROUND AND LEGISLATION

BACKGROUND

Many young Australians have mental health issues which can have lifetime impacts. In Australia one in seven 4 to 17 years olds experience a mental health condition every year¹.

Mental health and wellbeing for young children is about their emotions, what they experience and how they learn to manage and express them, the relationships they form and their ability to engage in close and positive relationships. A strong sense of wellbeing and positive mental health provides children with confidence and optimism, which maximises their learning potential, gives them a greater chance of long-term success, and helps them build stronger relationships.

Early intervention can improve children's mental health, and in turn, their lifetime outcomes. Good mental health in early childhood also provides a solid foundation for managing the transition from childhood to adolescence and adulthood. Early childhood service and schools play a key role in promoting mental health and wellbeing in children and can affect children's long-term mental health, relationships and learning.

The Early Years Learning Framework (the Framework) was developed to extend and enrich children's learning from birth to five years. Outcome 3 of the Framework talks about children having a strong sense of wellbeing. It guides early childhood practitioners in facilitating a learning environment that supports both physical and psychological development

Obligations under Child Safe Standard 8 requires staff and volunteers to be trained and supported to effectively implement the organisation's child safety and wellbeing policy. This Standard links to Standards 1 and 5, with all three Standards placing obligations on organisations to provide training and information for staff and volunteers on building safe environments for children and young people.

LEGISLATION AND STANDARDS

Relevant legislation and standards include but are not limited to:

- National Quality Standard: Quality Area 2
- The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia
- Education and Care Service and schools National Law Act 2010
- Education and Care Service and schools National Regulations 2011
- Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework

The most current amendments to listed legislation can be found at:

- Victorian Legislation – Victorian Law Today: www.legislation.vic.gov.au
- Commonwealth Legislation – Federal Register of Legislation: www.legislation.gov.au

DEFINITIONS



The terms defined in this section relate specifically to this policy. For regularly used terms e.g. Approved provider, Nominated supervisor, Notifiable complaints, Serious incidents, Duty of care, etc. refer to the Definitions file of the PolicyWorks catalogue.

Family-centred practice: Practice which:

- uses families' understanding of their children to support shared decision-making about each child's learning and development
- creates a welcoming and culturally inclusive environment, where all families are encouraged to participate in and contribute to children's learning and development

¹ The Mental Health of Children and Adolescents. Report on the second Australian Child and Adolescent Survey of Mental Health and Wellbeing (2015)

- actively engages families and children in planning children’s learning and development
- provides feedback to families on each child’s learning and provide information about how families can further advance children’s learning and development at home and in the community.

Mental health and wellbeing: For the purposes of this policy and for the Healthy Early Childhood Service and school s Achievement Program, the ‘Mental Health and Wellbeing’ health priority area focuses on social and emotional wellbeing and resilience.

Mental health in early childhood can be understood as a young child’s ability to ‘experience, regulate and express emotions; form close and secure interpersonal relationships; and explore the environment and learn – all in the context of family, community and cultural expectations for young children. Infant mental health is synonymous with healthy social and emotional development

SOURCES AND RELATED POLICIES



SOURCES

- Be You, Beyond Blue: www.beyondblue.org.au
- BlackDog Institute: www.blackdoginstitute.org.au
- Child First and family service and school s: www.serviceandschools.dffh.vic.gov.au/families-and-children
- Commission for Children and Young People, Child Safe standards: www.cryp.vic.gov.au
- Cancer Council Victoria, Achievement Program: www.achievementprogram.health.vic.gov.au/education/early-childhood-serviceandschools
- Department of Education and Training and Early Childhood Australia: [Wellbeing webinars](#)
- Early Childhood Australia, Code of Ethics: www.earlychildhoodaustralia.org.au/our-publications/eca-code-ethics
- Headspace: www.headspace.org.au
- United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child: www.unicef.org.au
- Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority: [The Wellbeing Practice Guide](#)

RELATED POLICIES

- Child Safe Environment and Wellbeing
- Code of Conduct
- Curriculum Development
- Interaction with Children
- Nutrition, Oral Health and Active Play
- Occupational Health and Safety
- Privacy and Confidentiality

Aurora School Related:

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
- Inclusion and Equity Policy
- Statement of Values and School Philosophy



EVALUATION

In order to assess whether the values and purposes of the policy have been achieved, the approved provider will:

- regularly seek feedback from everyone affected by the policy regarding its effectiveness, particularly in relation to identifying and responding to child safety concerns
- monitor the implementation, compliance, complaints and incidents in relation to this policy
- keep the policy up to date with current legislation, research, policy and best practice
- revise the policy and procedures as part of the service and school 's policy review cycle, or as required
- notifying all stakeholders affected by this policy at least 14 days before making any significant changes to this policy or its procedures, unless a lesser period is necessary due to risk ([Regulation 172 \(2\)](#)).



ATTACHMENTS

- Nil



AUTHORISATION

This policy was adopted by the approved provider of Aurora School and Aurora School Community Kindergarten in February 2024

REVIEW DATE: February 2027