Rowville Primary School

Student Engagement &
Well-Being Policy

To be read in conjunction with
*Effective Schools are Engaging Schools – Student Engagement Policy Guidelines*

September, 2009

Principal: Anne Babich
School Council President: Dean Bray
## Table of contents

1. **School Profile Statement**  
   3
2. **Whole-School Prevention Statement**  
   4
3. **Rights and Responsibilities**  
   6
4. **Shared Expectations**  
   12
5. **School Actions and Consequences**  
   15

**References**  
16
1 School profile statement

At Rowville Primary School we value:

Doing Your Best
Students, staff and school community strive to do their best in all aspects of school life - their learning, relationships and school environment.

Resilience
Students, staff and school community work in partnership to do whatever it takes to enable learning.

Understanding and Inclusion
Students, staff and school community together promote a safe and secure learning environment that recognises individual differences and values diversity.

Integrity
Students, staff and school community act in accordance with principles of moral and ethical conduct.

Care and Compassion
Students, staff and school community promote an attitude of respect and kindness for everyone by developing positive relationships, teamwork and communication.

Responsibility
Students, staff and school community model through their actions, relationships and attitudes, the importance of following a path that represents a common good and which balances individual interests with those required to create a positive learning environment for everyone.

Rowville Primary School proudly serves the local community. It was the first primary school in Rowville opening in 1973 with 250 students. The enrolment peaked in the 1980s when it reached 1000 students, making Rowville Primary one of the largest schools in the state. Since then the enrolment has slowly declined and in 2010 will be around 500 students.

The School Family Occupation (SFO) density for 2009 was 0.496 and 21% of students came from a language background other than English. The school is close to the socioeconomic 75th percentile of all government schools. This student profile has remained reasonably constant over the past five years. The school has a diverse ethnic student population with 22 nationalities represented.

Rowville Primary School is committed to providing a range of specialist classes and these are offered in Visual and Performing Arts, Italian LOTE, Physical Education and Information Communications Technology. The school has made a particular emphasis on incorporating learning technologies across the curriculum, and to generally improving literacy standards in the school.
2 Whole-school prevention statement

The foundation of our positive school culture is the active participation of all members of the school community so they feel valued, safe and secure; are provided with meaningful opportunities to contribute to the school; and have every opportunity to meet their personal and educational potential. A key component of the school’s approach to prevention is the ongoing personal and social learning throughout the whole school.

The leadership team regularly consults with students, parents/carers, support organisations and the broader community to ensure we are responsive to students’ social, emotional, cognitive and cultural needs.

Student voice is encouraged through participation in the student parliament, formulation of classroom protocols and various student forums. Students have multiple opportunities to have input into the creation of their educational experience, including their physical learning environment, which provides them with a sense of ownership and allows them to feel safe and supported in the environment they have created. The school explores opportunities for our students to take on meaningful responsibilities within the school.

Our positive school culture is also predicated on student engagement being the basis for learning. To support this, the leadership team is actively engaged in developing classroom practice to ensure that our pedagogy and curriculum engages all students by recognising and responding to their diverse learning needs. Effective teaching, inclusive and engaging curriculum and respectful relationships between staff and students is promoted through professional learning teams that encourage innovative pedagogy.

2.1 Prevention Practices

Attendance

The school understands that full attendance is a key to engagement and maximises every student’s ability to learn and our teacher’s ability to teach effectively. The importance of regular attendance is continually reinforced.

Restorative Practices and School-wide Positive Behaviour Support

Rowville Primary School implements Restorative Practices to encourage engagement and build care and compassion, understanding and inclusion, resilience, integrity, doing your best and responsibility in each individual student. This underpins personal and social learning across the school and all our personal interactions.

Quality teaching and learning

Rowville Primary School has developed a whole school approach to staff professional development in literacy and numeracy improvement as part of the school improvement agenda. In this way we ensure that the strategies and approaches to teaching and learning that are implemented are consistent across the school and are based in authoritative pedagogies. The professional learning team leaders will lead the learning of members in their teams. An onsite coaching program has operated in Literacy and Numeracy. Staff will continue to participate in Restorative Practices training.

Inclusion, Wellbeing & Transitions

All students in prep have a mentoring relationship with a year 6 buddy. Involvement of students in the neighbouring secondary college mentoring programs is being investigated for potential implementation for Year 9 and 10 students in 2010 and beyond.
We have commenced lunchtime programs that have a focus on building social competencies and constantly source opportunities to build on this in conjunction with groups outside the school, such as School Focussed Youth Support, to support student wellbeing, attendance, engagement and learning.

2.2 How we support positive relationships

The school nurtures the active involvement of parents/carers in supporting each student in their academic and social learning. It seeks to foster this cooperative approach with parents/carers through interviews, reports, phone calls, meetings and the use of diaries. The school is in the process of developing family/school partnership programs.

In encouraging and building this cooperative approach, it is acknowledged that events will occur that compromise this ideal. When this occurs the school will use a restorative approach to repair damaged relationships with individuals and groups within the school. Where appropriate, the school will inform and involve parents in these processes. The following restorative approach will be used.

A restorative question approach:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>When things go wrong</th>
<th>When someone has been hurt</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• What happened?</td>
<td>• What did you think when you realised what had happened?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• What were you thinking at the time?</td>
<td>• What impact has this incident had on you and others?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• What have you thought about since?</td>
<td>• What has been the hardest thing for you?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Who has been affected by what you</td>
<td>• What do you think needs to happen to make things right?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>have done? In what way?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• What do you think you need to do to</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>make things right?</td>
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</table>

A Staged response

![Restorative approach diagram]
This approach will be conducted in an informal way for minor incidents and be embedded in classroom teaching and learning.

Serious incidents will require a more formal restorative session that involves class teachers and/or the Assistant Principal; all persons affected in the incident and the details of the incident will be documented.

There will be situations where a formal conference involving the before-mentioned people, parents, support persons will be required. Any imposed consequence will be embedded in the restorative process that requires a response ‘that makes things right’ in relation to those who have been affected. To assist with this process, the school has adopted an Issues Resolution policy.

Where a student continues to have ongoing problems with relationships and social situations, the school will constitute a Student Support Group to develop an individual plan and devise strategies and approaches to assist the student with their social learning. This may include intervention from specialist services and external agencies in the local community.

Restorative practices are intended to move the focus away from a punitive consequence that is based on the establishment of wrong doing. Rather it seeks to value and support those involved so that they feel empowered to take positive action to address the situation and move forward. Restorative practice is about being respectful of every member of our school community, encouraging responsible behaviour and actions and ensuring that personal pride and dignity are maintained.

3. Rights and Responsibilities

3.1 Guiding principles

Every member of the school community has a right to fully participate in an educational environment that is safe, supportive and inclusive. Everyone deserves to be treated with respect and dignity.

3.2 Equal Opportunity

The Equal Opportunity Act 1995 sets out the types or grounds of discrimination that are unlawful and aims to promote community recognition and acceptance of the equal opportunity of men and women and the equality of people of all races, regardless of their religious or political convictions, their impairments or their age.

Under the act it is unlawful to discriminate against a person on the basis of the following attributes:

- age
- breastfeeding
- gender identity
- impairment
- industrial activity
- lawful sexual activity
- marital status
- parental status or status as carer
- physical features
- political belief or activity
- pregnancy
- race
- religious belief or activity
- sex
- sexual orientation
- personal association (with a person who is identified by reference to any of the above attributes).
3.3 The Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006

The Charter sets out a list of 20 rights that reflect the following four basic principles:

- freedom
- respect
- equality
- dignity.

The charter 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 emphasises the value of difference. The charter requires public authorities, including government schools and their employees, to act compatibly with human rights and to consider human rights when making decisions and delivering services. These include:

- the right not to be discriminated against
- the right to privacy and reputation
- the right to freedom of thought, conscience, religion and belief
- cultural Rights.

It is important to understand that with human rights comes a responsibility to respect others human rights.

All DEECD (Department of Education and Early Childhood Development) employees must comply with the Charter and give proper consideration to human rights when making decisions. Everyone should:

- encourage compliance with the Charter
- support others to act compatibly with the Charter, and
- respect and promote human rights.

Part of the monitoring of Human Rights will be to complete the Charter Compliance Checklist on the DEECD School Compliance web site.

3.4 Students with disabilities

The Disability Standards for Education 2005 clarify and make more explicit the obligations on schools and the rights of students under the Disability Discrimination Act 1992. The standards cover enrolment, participation, curriculum development, student support services, harassment and victimisation.

An education provider must make 'reasonable adjustments' to accommodate a student with disability. An adjustment is a measure or action taken to assist a student with disability to participate in education and training on the same basis as other students. An adjustment is reasonable if it does this while taking into account the student’s learning needs and balancing the interests of all parties affected, including those of the student with the disability, the education provider, staff and other students.

In determining whether an adjustment is reasonable, an education provider should take into account information about:

- the nature of the student’s disability
- his or her preferred adjustment
- any adjustments that have been provided previously
- any recommended or alternative adjustments.

This information might come from the student, an associate of the student, independent experts, or a combination of these people.
An education provider should ensure that the student, or an associate of the student, has timely information about the processes for determining whether the proposed adjustment would cause unjustifiable hardship to the provider. The provider should also ensure that these processes maintain the dignity, respect, privacy and confidentiality of the student and the associates of the student, consistent with the rights of the rest of the community.

The provider may consider all likely costs and benefits, both direct and indirect, for the provider, the student and any associates of the student and any other persons in the learning or wider community, including:

- costs associated with additional staffing, providing special resources or modifying the curriculum
- costs resulting from the student’s participation in the learning environment, including any adverse impact on learning and social outcomes for the student, other students and teachers
- benefits of the student’s participation in the learning environment, including positive learning and social outcomes for the student, other students and teachers, and
- any financial incentives, such as subsidies or grants, available to the provider if the student participates.

The Disability Discrimination Act and the Education Standards do not require changes to be made if this would impose unjustifiable hardship to a person or organisation.

3.5 Bullying and Harassment

Definitions:

**Harassment** is any verbal, physical or sexual conduct (including gestures) which is uninvited, unwelcome or offensive to a person.

**Bullying** is repeated oppression, physical or psychological, of a less powerful person by a more powerful person or group.

**Cyber bullying** is a form of bullying which is carried out through an internet service such as email, chat room, discussion group, online social networking, instant messaging or web pages. It can also include bullying through mobile phone technologies such as SMS. It may involve text or images (photos, drawings).

Examples of cyber bullying behaviour are:

- teasing and being made fun of
- spreading of rumours online
- sending unwanted messages
- defamation.

Cyber bullying can happen to anyone and the bully can act anonymously if they want. People can also be bullied online by groups of people such as class groups or collective members of an online community.

It is important for the school to provide a safe and friendly environment for students and staff and to encourage care, courtesy and respect for others. All persons have a legal right to protection from harassment under the Commonwealth Sex Discrimination Act and the Victorian Equal Opportunity Act.
The effects of harassment or bullying include:

- poor health – anxiety, depression
- lower self esteem
- reduced study performance
- missed classes, social withdrawal
- reduced career prospects.

If you witness another person being harassed or bullied this should be referred to a teacher or staff member. This will then be reported to an appropriate person. However, if your friend is harassing another person, it is alright to let them know that their behaviour is unacceptable.

Bystanders who do nothing to stop bullying may be contributing to the problem by providing an audience for the bully.

Harassment is usually directed at a person because of their gender, race, creed or abilities. It can be subtle or explicit.

**Subtle: (the most common)**

They include:

- offensive staring and leering
- unwanted comments about physical appearance and sexual preference
- racist or smutty comments or jokes
- questions about another’s sexual activity
- persistent comments about a person’s private life or family
- physical contact e.g. purposely brushing up against another’s body
- offensive name calling.

**Explicit: (obvious)**

They include:

- grabbing, aggressive hitting, pinching and shoving etc
- unwelcome patting, touching, embracing
- repeated requests for dates, especially after refusal
- offensive gestures, jokes, comments, letters, phone calls or e-mail
- sexually and/or racially provocative remarks
- displays of sexually graphic material – pornography
- requests for sexual favours.

Extreme forms of sexual harassment will lead to criminal prosecution.

**Bullying can involve such things as**

- grabbing, aggressive staring, hitting, pinching, kicking, pushing and shoving
- publicly excluding a person from your group
- taking or breaking a person’s property
- knocking a person’s books or belongings out of their hands or off their desk
- teasing a person because of their looks.

**Cyber-bullying**

Being involved in online spaces – either at home or at school - requires students to behave responsibly. This includes:

- the language you use and the things you say
- how you treat others
- respecting people’s property (e.g. copyright)
- visiting appropriate places.
Behaving safely online means:

- protecting your own privacy and personal information (we used to call it 'stranger danger')
- selecting appropriate spaces to work and contribute
- protecting the privacy of others (this can be sharing personal information or images)
- being proactive in letting someone know if there is something 'not quite right'. At home this would be a parent or carer, at school a teacher.

If you are being harassed or bullied you should:

- tell the person you don’t like what they are doing and you want them to stop
- discuss the matter with a student leader or a teacher/coordinator that you feel comfortable with.

Your concerns will be taken seriously. All complaints will be treated confidentially.

### 3.6 Rights and Responsibilities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>All Members of the Rowville Primary School community have a right to -</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• fully participate in an environment free of discriminatory behaviour – including racist, sexist, ability-based, class-based and homophobic forms of harassment, bullying, vilification, violence, intimidation, abuse and exclusion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• be treated with respect and dignity</td>
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<tr>
<td>• feel valued, safe and supported in an environment that encourages freedom of thought and expression.</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>All Members of the Rowville Primary School community have a responsibility to -</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• acknowledge their obligations under the Equal Opportunity Act 1995 and the Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 and communicate these obligations to all members of the school community</td>
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<tr>
<td>• participate and contribute to a learning environment that supports the learning of self and others</td>
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<tr>
<td>• ensure their actions and views do not impact on the health and wellbeing of other members of the school community.</td>
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### Rights and Responsibilities of Students:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rights</th>
<th>Responsibilities</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Students have a right to:</td>
<td>Students have a responsibility to:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• work in a secure environment where, without intimidation, bullying (including cyber-bullying) or harassment they are able to fully develop their talents, interests and ambitions</td>
<td>• participate fully in the school’s educational program and to attend regularly. Students should also be expected to display positive relationships that demonstrate respect for themselves, their peers, their teachers and all other members of the school community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• participate fully in the school’s educational program</td>
<td>• demonstrate respect for the rights of others, including the right to learn, will contribute to an engaging educational experience for themselves and other students</td>
</tr>
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</table>
As students progress through school they will be encouraged and supported to take greater responsibility for their own learning and participation as members of the whole school community. This involves developing as individual learners who increasingly manage their own learning and growth by setting goals and managing resources to achieve these goals.

Students should, with support, be expected to participate fully in the school's educational program and to attend regularly. Students should also through their social interactions demonstrate respect for themselves, their peers, their teachers and all other members of the school community.

### Rights and Responsibilities of Parents/Carers:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rights</th>
<th>Responsibilities</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>parents/carers have a right to expect that their children will be educated in a secure environment in which care, courtesy and respect for the rights of others are encouraged.</td>
<td>Parents/carers have a responsibility to:</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• promote positive educational outcomes for their children by taking an active interest in their child’s educational progress and by modelling positive relationships</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Ensure their child’s regular attendance</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Engage in regular and constructive communication with school staff regarding their child’s learning</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Support the school in maintaining a safe and respectful learning environment for all students.</td>
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</table>

### Rights and Responsibilities of Teachers
Rights | Responsibilities
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Teachers have a right to | Teachers have a responsibility to
  • expect that they will be able to teach in an orderly and cooperative environment | • Fairly, reasonably and consistently, implement the engagement policy
  • be informed, within Privacy requirements, about matters relating to students that will affect the teaching and learning program for that student. | • Know how students learn and how to teach them effectively
  | • Know the content they teach
  | • Know their students
  | • Plan and assess for effective learning
  | • Create and maintain safe and challenging learning environments
  | • use a range of teaching strategies and resources to engage students in effective learning.

4. Shared expectations

4.1 Schools – principals, teachers and school staff
Schools have a responsibility to provide an educational environment that ensures that all students are valued and cared for, feel they are part of the school, and can engage effectively in their learning and experience success. Rowville 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 excepted and appropriate 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.

The values of Rowville Primary School Community are demonstrated by the following shared expectations and behaviours:

Doing Your Best
  • the school is a place where we actively participate and strive to learn
  • the way we relate to others shows we are proud of our school, ourselves and our family
  • we strive for excellence in everything we do.

Integrity
  • we always do what is right and fair for everyone
  • we work, learn and play in an environment of mutual respect
  • we take pride in ourselves and our school
  • we always ask ourselves the question ‘How can we do it better?’

Responsibility
  • we take responsibility for our own thoughts feelings and actions
  • we show genuine understanding of and empathy for others well-being
  • we endeavour to be self-motivated learners
  • we take care of our own and others personal property and space.

Understanding and Inclusion
  • we value that people are different
• we help to make the environment safe and happy
• we make sure that we let others join in with our games and activities
• we work and play cooperatively with others.

Resilience
• we believe in ourselves and our ability to achieve goals
• we set goals for our learning and we keep trying even when things get hard
• we pick ourselves up and move on when things don’t go our way.

Care and Compassion
• we show genuine understanding of others and their wellbeing
• we act in a kind and generous manner towards others
• we resolve differences in peaceful ways.

4.2 Expectations - Staff

Engagement
The school leadership team will:

• uphold the right of every child to receive a quality education
• 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
• Work in partnership with the Rowville Primary School community to develop policies and procedures consistent with the school values and aspirations and the Department of Education & Early Childhood Development’s Guidelines
• Collaborate to identify the diversity of the school community and deliver teaching and learning, educational and extra-curricular activities, facilities, student services and community linkages which are inclusive and responsive to student needs.

Teachers at Rowville Primary School will:

• develop a shared responsibility for all students
• develop flexible pedagogical styles to engage different learners
• deliver curriculum and assessment that challenges and extends students learning
• develop positive and meaningful relationships with students that promote engagement, wellbeing and learning
• provide opportunities for “student voice” to develop a positive school culture in and outside the classroom.

Attendance
In compliance with DEECD procedures school staff will:

• promote regular attendance with all members of the school community
• monitor and follow up on absences.

Positive Relationships
Rowville Primary School will support and promote positive relationships by developing and implementing shared behavioural expectations with the school community and by delivering whole-school responses to social issues. All members of the school community are expected to participate in the educational environment with curiosity, enthusiasm and mutual respect. Rowville Primary School is committed to engaging all students and will only exclude students as a matter of last resort and in extreme circumstances.

The school leadership team will:
• lead and promote preventative approaches to social issues by incorporating student wellbeing at the core of school business;
• monitor the profile of social issues at the school and the effectiveness of implemented strategies
• provide appropriate professional development opportunities for all staff to build their capacity to promote positive relationships and relational learning.

Teachers at Rowville Primary School will:
• use the Student Engagement policy as a basis for negotiating a class-based set of shared norms with students;
• teach students social competencies through curriculum content and pedagogical approach;
• employ relationship management strategies that reflect the behaviours expected from students and which focus on supporting positive behaviours;
• build a collegiate atmosphere with other school staff to share strategies and support each other to reflect on one’s own relationship management approach;
• involve appropriate specialist expertise where necessary.

4.3 Expectations – Students

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 day that the school is open to students. If students can’t come to school, they must provide an explanation from their parents/carers to their teacher.

Relationships

Students are expected to:
• 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
• contribute to a positive school environment that is safe, inclusive and happy
• understand that bullying, including cyber-bullying, violence, property damage, inappropriate language and disrupting the learning of other students is unacceptable
• be aware of the school’s Anti-Bullying policy and Student Code of Conduct.

4.4 Expectations – 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 expected to actively participate in supporting their child’s learning by building a positive relationship with the school through attendance at student-parent-teacher meetings, student activities, school celebrations, assemblies, student support groups and responding to communications (including the student diary).

**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.

**Relationship**

Parents/carers should understand the school's behavioural expectations and work with the school to promote a consistent approach that supports their child's learning, engagement and endeavour both in and out of school.

5. School actions and consequences

**Ongoing Relationship issues**

The school uses a restorative philosophy to manage relationships and teach emotional literacy.

Where students continue to experience difficulty in learning emotional literacy a range of strategies and responses will be utilised. These may include:

- **Discussing** the behaviour problems and reaching an agreement for future behaviour
- **Explicit Teaching** of appropriate behaviours
- **Monitoring** and **providing feedback** (Student diary)
- **Reflection** by allowing students an opportunity and place to settle their own emotions
- **Alternative Learning Environment** a student may be provided with alternative learning arrangements within the school
- **Counselling** will be provided for individuals, staff and parents to assist with managing serious issues
- **Student Support Group Meeting** involving parents/cares and/or relevant DEECD support staff or outside agencies (See Effective Schools are Engaging Schools - Student Engagement Policy Guidelines for process required).
- **Suspension & Expulsion** for serious disciplinary measures we follow DEECD Engaging Schools are Effective Schools: Student Engagement Policy Guidelines 2009 developed in response to Ministerial Order No.184

**References**


Page 15 of 16
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<th><strong>Student Engagement and Well-Being Policy</strong></th>
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This policy was ratified by School Council in September 2009 and was reviewed in 2011. It is due to be reviewed in 2013.