Effective Schools are Engaging Schools

Student Engagement Policy

2010 - 2013
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Introduction

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

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

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

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

Rationale
The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development is committed to providing safe, secure and high quality learning and development opportunities for every student in all Victorian schools.

Our students are able to reach their full potential when they are happy, healthy and safe, and when there is a positive school culture that is fair and respectful to engage and support their learning.

Our school is a committed and unified partnership of teachers, parents and children. We value diversity and strive for excellence. We are committed to providing a high quality education in a cooperative, caring and safe environment. Children are encouraged and challenged to reach their full potential. We strongly believe in the importance of celebrating our students’ achievements and in acknowledging and enjoying the positive aspects of their personal development.

Our school values of respect, learning, trust, honesty, tolerance, caring and cooperation are deeply embedded in our practice and code of cooperation. We have a strong and growing reputation for the strategic support and relevant programs we provide for the children and their parents, in our growing Inclusion Program. The partnership between home and school is encouraged at all levels of school operation. Parents are actively involved in classroom programs and a range of other school activities.

Purpose
To relate to and be consistent with the ‘Effective Schools are Engaging Schools: Student Engagement Policy Guidelines’, in areas such as the encouragement of educational achievement and excellence, prevention of absences and inappropriate behaviour.

Engagement

We have continued to focus on improving levels of student engagement through reflection upon practices and analysing feedback student surveys and classroom visits. Staff participate in professional discussions and undertake Professional Learning as identified as part of their Performance review process. Interactive Whiteboards/Televisions and the recently implemented Netbook Program, Junior School Council and the development of Student Voice forums have been implemented to allow greater student voice in their learning and increased engagement.

Gifted and Talented Programs also allow opportunities for students to engage in enrichment and extension activities in a small group structure and include programs such as Tournament of the Minds (TOM), chess, Math’s enrichment and Gifted and Talented Art Program and Wakikirri. Individual learning and/or behaviour plans are developed in conjunction with parents and students, where appropriate. These plans detail strengths, areas to improve and what home and school
need to do to maximize student learning. We also seek to involve as many students as possible in the operation of the school through School and House Captaincy, Junior School Council and monitor roles throughout the school, particularly in grade 6 where students are flag monitors and work in the office and library.

**Wellbeing**

We have introduced and continued with a number of ongoing supportive programs in dealing with student wellbeing. Individual Learning Plans are formulated in conjunction with staff, parents and students as necessary. The school continues to utilise Educational Support (ES) and a number of outside agencies to further enhance Student Wellbeing. These include: Guidance Officer, Speech Therapist, Hearing Impaired Specialist, Mentors and in 2010 members of the CASEA team (from the CAMS unit of the Austin Hospital) who will be supporting students and their families with social and emotional issues.

Other programs Morang South Primary School has initiated to further support students include:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class meetings / Circle Time</th>
<th>Kids Hope Mentoring program</th>
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<tr>
<td>Specialist Days P-6</td>
<td>Buddies P-6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lunchtime activities program</td>
<td>Student led assemblies</td>
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<tr>
<td>Whole school concert or Wakikirri (alternating years)</td>
<td>Junior School Council</td>
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<tr>
<td>School and House Captains</td>
<td>Leadership opportunities for all grade 6 students</td>
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<td>Leadership courses for students</td>
<td>Student Voice</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bright Futures</td>
<td>Interschool Sports</td>
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<td>Carols</td>
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All these programs are underpinned by the importance place on the School Values by all members of the Morang South PS community.

**Attendance**

Morang South Primary School endorses full attendance as a key priority for school engagement in order to maximize every student’s ability to learn and our teachers’ ability to teach effectively. We have adopted the “It’s not okay to be away” approach to promoting school attendance. We have actively liaised with parents to establish partnerships to promote regular and positive attendance.

The following strategies have been developed and implemented to minimize absences of at-risk students:

- “It’s not okay to be away” weekly award.
- Newsletter articles highlighting team absences
- Newsletter articles reinforcing the importance of school attendance and the impact that absence has on achievement (academic and social)
- Comments in mid and end of year reports related to absence and the impact it has on achievement (social and academic)
- Teachers contact families of students with continued absence
Prevention programs

Transition
Morang South Primary School’s Strategic Intent is to provide effective and supportive transition programs for all students entering, moving through, and departing the school. The programs have been refined over a number of years and as such, are clearly defined and working well. There are three areas of transition which we focus on.

1. **Pre-School** children are invited to participate in a Transition Program involving parents in information/educational sessions whilst their children attend their Kinder to Prep transition sessions. Local preschools are also invited and encouraged to visit the school throughout the year.

2. **Within the School** we continue to support students as they move between home groups by ensuring they have time in their new grade area and future grade in the preceding year. (i.e. prep-1, 1-2, 2-3, 3-4, 4-5, 5-6) They work with other students and staff within the units to familiarise themselves with their new learning environment and help reduce the anxieties students may have as they move through the school and grade 5 students have the opportunity to visit local secondary schools for ‘taster’ days.

3. **Year 6** students are given targeted support in a lead up to their Orientation Day in December and through visits by relevant Secondary College staff. We maintain close links with our neighbouring secondary colleges.

Staged response
In dealing with issues related to student behaviours we have a staged response. Minor incidents are dealt with in an informal way and are embedded in classroom teaching and learning through a Restorative Practices approach which is part of the Morang South PS Code of Cooperation.

In 2010, the strategies presented by Professor Ramon Lewis through the AIZ, will be implemented across the school. These reinforce identifying student behavioural characteristics and approaching each student in a positive, yet assertive manner, whilst reinforcing their right to learn in a supportive, safe and comfortable environment.

More serious incidents are dealt with in a formal matter with all students affected discussing the issue with a staff member which is then documented as part of the serious consequence procedure. (Appendix page 18 & 20)

There will be situations where a formal conference will be required. This will involve the staff, parents and student to discuss the issue and formulate an appropriate documented response such as developing an action plan or individual learning improvement plans or individual behaviour improvement plans. This may include intervention from specialist services and external agencies.

Values Program
Morang South Primary School aims to provide a safe, happy and secure environment that meets the needs of all members of the school community. This is modelled through our School Values Program and commitment to our Code of Cooperation which endorses Restorative Practices. The teaching of values will be used to develop a sense of personal responsibility, confidence and the ability to risk-take and to develop strategies to eliminate bullying and prepare students to be resilient in their future life.

Our core values include:

RESPECT, COOPERATION, LEARNING, TRUST, HONESTY, CARE & TOLERANCE

Literacy and Numeracy Strategies
Literacy and Numeracy continue to be the key focus of learning. Literacy and Numeracy skills are fundamental for each student’s development and future success. Morang South PS aims to improve levels of achievement in Literacy and Numeracy for all students through the implementation of small, targeted group teaching, like-ability group instruction, extension and support opportunities, team planning, appropriate resourcing and budgeting.
**Professional Learning**

Professional Learning is given high priority at Morang South Primary School. Educational research advocates ‘Professional Development works when it is “school-based and embedded in teachers’ daily work.”’ (Fullan, Hill & Crevola, 2006, p.24) In 2010/2011 Morang South PS will continue to participate in the Northern Metropolitan Region Achievement Improvement Zone, focusing on Literacy, Numeracy and Developmental Behaviour Management. This initiative also reinforces the concept that the best professional learning happens in schools. This model centers on the idea of the members of the School Improvement Team who attend regional professional learning sharing the latest pedagogical practices with the staff at a whole school and team level. Thus providing opportunities for everyone to implement additional strategies in the classroom, resulting in increased consistency across the school with regard to teaching practice, team planning and whole school documentation. The AIZ model and professional learning will also assist the development of such consistency at both a Network and Regional level.

Where appropriate staff are further encouraged to develop their teaching and learning through actively seeking professional development opportunities relevant to their situation (e.g. Graduate teacher Program, Hearing Impairment). Staff are expected to present an overview to colleagues at regular staff meetings. All staff have involvement in professional learning teams. In 2010 and 2011 these will focus on the AIZ initiatives.

**How we support positive behaviour and relationships**

Each classroom, specialist and OSHC program will negotiate a classroom agreement (using specific language common to all grades) based on the school values and School Student Code of Cooperation guidelines. Regular class meetings are held which encourage students to reflect, question and evaluate their learning and wellbeing. All teachers are working from a common term 1 planner that promotes personal and communal responsibility. Throughout the year teachers will also integrate the school values and personal and communal responsibility into their teaching and learning programs.

Commencing in 2011, there will be an increased emphasis on our Social competencies program: “Teaming for success- Striving for excellence”. The program focuses our school values, rights and responsibilities, restorative practices, different forms of bullying (including cyber bullying) and socially effective behaviours.
Section 1: School profile

Location
Morang South Primary School was established on its present site in 1996 and is located at 77 Gorge Road, South Morang. It is a fringe suburban school and part of the rapidly growing Plenty River corridor. Since then it has achieved its own unique identity in the local and wider community. The closest nearby schools are The Lakes South Morang, Plenty Parklands in Blossom Park and Meadow Glen in Epping. We have a kindergarten, with two sites located within walking distance of the school. Children either walk to school or are driven by their parents.

Demographics
Children attending our school are drawn from both the immediate area and beyond. There is some diversity in cultural and ethnic background. However, the school has a School Family Occupation Index of 0.46. This indicates we have relatively low numbers of children who speak a language other than English at home, who are of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander background, of children whose parents receive the Educational Maintenance Allowance [EMA], or of children who frequently change schools.

Enrolments rose to 610 in 2005, and since the opening of The Lakes and Marymede [local Catholic School] have gradually declined to our current enrolment of 480. A new housing estate is being developed nearby so we anticipate that our enrolments will stabilise and possibly even grow again in the next few years.

The school is located in attractive, well maintained grounds. During the last five years we have completed building six new classrooms and attached them to four existing classrooms and have created an open learning area between them. There are ample playing areas for the children that include two lots of play equipment, creative play areas, two basketball courts, a soccer sized oval of synthetic turf and cricket nets. All the playground equipment is shaded and so is a large area of the quadrangle. In December 2010, the BER project, comprising of a Gym, a dedicated Performing Arts area, an open learning area and canteen was completed.

Six water tanks have been installed to enable us to water the gardens and eventually the area of the oval that is still natural grass.

During 2006 we put in a submission to the Lords Taverners and were successful in being granted at no cost to us, a twelve seater school bus. This is used extensively by us and loaned to other schools in the Whittlesea Network. The bus is located in a garage and attached to the garage is a large storage shed.

We have a canteen that operates on Monday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday

School Structure and Organisation
Since 2004 we have been a Values based school and have a comprehensive Code of Cooperation that is consistent across the school. In 2010, we reviewed our Code of Cooperation in the light of Restorative practices and Ramon Lewis behaviour management theory and developed this Student Engagement policy.

We are committed to using Quality Processes and Tools as part of our Continuous Improvement Cycle.

We place great emphasis on children being taught at their individual instructional level with flexible groupings in English and Mathematics. We provide a challenging and comprehensive curriculum that aims to meet the needs of every child. Early Years operates in the P – 4 areas. The English On Line is conducted with every child at the beginning of their prep, grade 1 and grade 2 year.

Teachers in the early and middle years develop programs to meet the needs of children with special abilities and those experiencing difficulties. This includes catering for children in our growing and expanding Inclusion Program who are warmly welcomed into our school. Currently we have eleven children on the program and employ 2 Literacy support staff and 7 Integration Aides to cater for their needs.

In 2010, in conjunction with EPIC we commenced a Transition to Prep program to cater for the needs of students with special needs that are not ready to enter the main stream component of the State Primary system. This program is continuing and operates with 10 students, one full time teacher and one teacher aide and regular volunteers.

We have also developed a range of strategies and programs to meet the needs of gifted children and this has become a feature of our school. We determine who our gifted children are by assessment and then develop Individual Learning
Plans for them and ensure they are grouped with children of like minds. Some specialist programs are offered to extend these children too - Visual Arts, Mathematics and Thinking Skills e.g. Tournament of Minds.

We also have a range of extension and enrichment programs for interested children – Some operate in school time and many at lunchtimes – Chess Club, Art/Craft Club and sporting competitions. A Keyboard program and singing program operate with an average of thirty children participating each year. A guitar program is also offered to interested children.

In the years between the concert years the Performing Arts Teacher runs Wakakiri, a story dance competition. We have a school band. We also have an extensive and developmental camping program is run from prep to grade 6.

Graduation of grade 6 children, to celebrate the completion of their primary education, has become a school tradition.

There are four computers in all prep to 2 classrooms. In 2009 MSPS trialed introduction of 1-1 notebook computers in 2 classrooms. This program has been extended to all grade 5/6 students in 2010 and grades 3/4 in 2011. There are also a variety of peripheral devices, including interactive whiteboards and televisions used across the school. ICT is used extensively across all areas in a variety of contexts. We are currently developing an eLearning Plan which includes a Victorian Essential Learning Standards (VELS) based set of competencies for each grade level. We have a well defined ICT scope and sequence and an eLearning Code of Cooperation which parents discuss with their children and sign.

The whole school is networked and connected to the Internet and an effective Intranet operates across the school. We are currently in the process of implementing the rollout of the Ultranet. Our staff confidently and routinely use their notebook computers to communicate, plan, research and carry out other work related functions electronically.

The Integrated Curriculum inquiry approach is the model used for planning and the Victorian Essential Learning Standards form the basis of this. Professional Action Learning Teams have been operating during the last five years. These have been based around the VELS levels. This year they are Literacy & Numeracy. We have a strong focus on the Middle Years and many of the strategies to engage and motivate students are utilized.

Specialist areas operating at the moment are: Physical Education, Performing Arts, and Visual Arts. Auslan is taught Prep-3 through the Visual Arts. We hope to expand this to grades 4-6 in coming years.

We have a very enthusiastic and extremely competent School Council. They oversee the budget, all curriculum development, Strategic Plan and Annual Implementation Plan, Annual Reports, Self Assessment and Reviews.

All planning is strongly data driven with assessment data collected regularly throughout the year. An assessment schedule has been developed and the results form the basis for informing planning and teaching, reporting to parents and to DEECD. Team information nights and three-way interviews are conducted during term one for grades one to six, two information evenings for Prep parents are held in December prior to their children commencing and in term one when they commence. Three-way interviews are also conducted in term 3 at all grade levels and all children have portfolios. In 2010, Grade 5/6 have introduced digital portfolios.
## Whole School Values

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respect</th>
<th>Learning</th>
<th>Trust</th>
<th>Honesty</th>
<th>Caring</th>
<th>Tolerance</th>
<th>Cooperation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Definition</td>
<td>Treating everybody and everything with consideration and courtesy</td>
<td>Gaining knowledge, skills and understanding through endeavour and experience</td>
<td>Confidently relying on someone believing they will make the appropriate choices for both the individual and the group</td>
<td>Being truthful, sincere and open so others can trust you</td>
<td>Showing concern for others and being thoughtful and understanding of their feelings</td>
<td>Working together towards a common goal and being able to work and act positively with others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This means</td>
<td>Caring about myself, others and the environment</td>
<td>Knowing and understanding more</td>
<td>Doing the right thing and having faith in others</td>
<td>Your thoughts, words and actions reflect what you say or do</td>
<td>Thinking with the heart.</td>
<td>Finding ways of allowing for and celebrating differences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In the context of Morang South PS this happens when</td>
<td>• I interact positively with others</td>
<td>• I reflect on my learning</td>
<td>• I can be relied upon</td>
<td>• I tell the truth</td>
<td>• I consider the feelings of others</td>
<td>• I contribute positively to the team</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Teaming for success

- I interact positively with others
- I am loyal to and supportive of my community
- I show courtesy to everyone – using manners.
- I treat others the way I wish to be treated
- I am responsible for my own property
- I am careful with the property of others
- I take care of the environment
- I have a positive and resilient approach to life

### Striving for excellence

- I am kind and considerate
- I am forgiving
- I am understanding
- I treat others the way I wish to be treated
- I demonstrate my honesty by my thoughts, words and actions
- I truthfully report the words and actions I am concerned about
- I consider the feelings of others
- I value and listen to opinions
- I do my best to get on with others
- I am patient
- I treat others equally
- I see each person I meet as a unique being
- I stay calm in difficult situations
- I accept and respect other’s differences and beliefs
- I value and listen to opinions
- I do my best to get on with others
- I am patient
- I treat others equally
- I see each person I meet as a unique being
- I stay calm in difficult situations
- I accept and respect other’s differences and beliefs
Section 3: Rights and Responsibilities

3.1 Guiding principles
At Morang South Primary School we believe that at the very foundation of student engagement are the following premises (Based on Ramon Lewis’ research):
- At our school, everyone has the right to work and learn.
- At our school, everyone has the right to feel safe and comfortable.

In line with our school values everyone deserved to be treated with respect and dignity, with every member of our school community being aware and demonstrating the underlying principles of these values.

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 equality of men and women, and the equality of people of all races, regardless of their religious or political convictions, their impairments or their age.

3.3 The Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006
Morang South Primary School endorses The Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act of 2006. 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 emphasizes 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.

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rights</th>
<th>Responsibilities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Students have a right to work and learn.</td>
<td>Students have a responsibility to:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Students have a right to feel safe and comfortable.</td>
<td>- be prepared to learn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Staff have a right to work and learn.</td>
<td>- explore their full potential</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Staff have a right to feel safe and comfortable.</td>
<td>- respect the rights of others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Parents/carers/members of our school community and visitors have a right to work and learn.</td>
<td>- adhere to the eLearning Agreement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Parents/carers/members of our school community and visitors have a right to feel safe and comfortable.</td>
<td>Staff have a responsibility to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- build positive relationships with students as a basis for engagement and learning</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- use and manage the resources of the school to create stimulating, safe and meaningful learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- treat all members of the school community with respect, fairness and dignity</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Parents/carers have a responsibility to</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- take an active interest in their child’s educational process</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- model positive behavior</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- ensure their child’s regular attendance</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- maintain open communication</td>
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<td>- support the school in maintaining an effective learning environment for all students.</td>
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</table>
At Morang South Primary School we have shared expectations across our whole school community. These expectations have been developed to ensure that the learning, safety and rights of all stakeholders are respected. Our shared expectations are encapsulated in our school mission statement:

\textit{Morang South Primary School is a committed and unified partnership of teachers, parents and children. We value diversity and strive for excellence. We are committed to providing a high quality education in a cooperative, caring and safe environment. Children are encouraged and challenged to reach their full potential.}

Our expectations are intended to be positive in that they set out what is expected and appropriate behaviours for our school community. Our shared expectations are intended to support individual students and families that come to our community from a diversity of backgrounds, communities and experiences.

Effective schools share high expectations for the whole-school community. Shared expectations are:

- jointly negotiated, owned and implemented by all members of the school community, including students
- clear and specific
- focused on positive and pro-social behaviours
- focused on prevention and early intervention
- supported by relevant procedures
- consistent, fair and reasonable
- linked to appropriate actions and consequences.

Morang South PS’s shared expectations and behaviours are reflected in the values the school have determined as being at the core of our beliefs for teaming for success and striving for excellence. (Refer to document on page 18)

**Expectations – Staff**

**Engagement**

The school staff will:

- Set high, yet realistic expectations for every child while maintaining the philosophy that all students can succeed given sufficient time and support.
- Ensure compliance with its duty of care obligations to each student as well as its obligations under the equal opportunity and human rights legislation
- Collaborate with the MSPS community to develop policies and procedures consistent with its values and aspirations and DEECD guidelines
- Develop flexible pedagogical styles to engage different learners
- Deliver teaching and learning, educational and extra-curricular activities, facilities, student services and community linkages which are inclusive and responsive to student needs
- Deliver curriculum and assessment that challenges and extends student learning
- Provide opportunities for student voice in developing a positive school culture in and outside the classroom

**Attendance**

In compliance with DEECD guidelines MSPS staff will:

- Promote regular attendance with all members of the school community, using the It’s Not OK to be Away initiative
- Monitor and follow up on absences
**Behaviour**

Morang South PS will support and promote positive behaviours by developing and implementing shared behavioural expectations with the school community and by delivering whole school responses to behavioural issues in line with DEECD Student Engagement Policy Guidelines.

The school staff will:

- Promote preventative approaches to behavioural issues by incorporating student well being
- Monitor the profile of behaviour issues at the school and the effectiveness of implemented strategies
- Attend relevant Professional Learning opportunities to build their capacity to promote positive behaviours
- Use the Student Engagement Policy and Values program as a basis for negotiating a class-based set of shared expectations with students
- Teach students social competencies through curriculum content, Values program and pedagogical approach
- Employ behaviour management strategies (Restorative Practices and Ramon Lewis 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 behaviour management approach
- Involve appropriate specialist expertise where necessary

**Expectations – Student**

**Engagement**

Students are expected to:

- Approach their learning in a positive and curious way
- Have high expectations that they can learn
- Allow others to learn
- Allow the teachers to teach
- Respect, value and learn from the differences of others
- 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 are unable to attend school, they must provide an explanation in writing from their parents/carers to the teacher. Students are expected to arrive on time and be ready to learn.

**Behaviour**

Students are expected to:

- Demonstrate behaviour and attitudes that support the wellbeing and learning for all and contribute to a positive school environment that is safe, inclusive and happy
- Understand that bullying, including cyber-bullying, unsafe behaviour, property damage, inappropriate language and disrupting the learning of other students is unacceptable
- Comply with school and class agreements
Expectations – Parents/Carers

Engagement

Parents/Carers are expected to:

• Assist the school to provide student centered responses by providing all relevant information to the school
• Actively participate in supporting their child’s learning by -
  • building a positive relationship with the school,
  • supporting class programs through homework,
  • assisting where possible in the classroom,
  • reading and responding if necessary to term planners, diaries, notices
  • communicating with the child’s class teacher
  • making time to discuss what is happening at school with their child
  • ensuring their child has the time and energy to work , learn and enjoy school
• Attendance at three-way interviews (parent/teacher interviews), student activities, school celebrations, student support groups
• Support the school’s efforts to educate young people to live in a diverse world by promoting an understanding and appreciation of diversity at home

Attendance

Parents/carers are expected to ensure:

• Enrolment details for their children are correct
• Their children attend school regularly and arrive on time
• If the child is absent, to provide a written reason on their return to school

Behaviour

Morang South Primary school is committed to providing opportunities to celebrate appropriate and positive behaviour. Parents/carers should understand the school’s behavioural expectations and work with the staff to promote a consistent approach that supports their child’s learning, engagement and endeavour both in and out of the school. When necessary, parents/carers are expected to take part in discussion with the school to resolve issues and agree on consequences of inappropriate behaviour of their child.
Bullying

The 2010 DEECD resource, Building Respectful and Safe Schools: A resource for school communities, supports schools to prevent and respond to bullying and all forms of unacceptable behaviour including harassment. This publication defines bullying as the following:

- Bullying is when someone, or a group of people, deliberately upset or hurt another person or damage their property, reputation or social acceptance on more than one occasion. There is an imbalance of power in incidents of bullying with the bully or bullies having more power at the time due to age, size, status or other reasons. (Page 7)

- There are four types of bullying:
  - Direct Physical Bullying
  - Direct Verbal Bullying
  - Indirect Bullying
  - Cyberbullying

What bullying is not

Many distressing behaviours are not examples of bullying even though they are unpleasant and often require teacher intervention and management.

**Mutual Conflict:** involves and argument or disagreement between people but not an imbalance of power. Both parties are upset and usually both want a resolution. Unresolved mutual conflict can develop into bullying if one of the parties targets the other repeatedly in retaliation.

**Social rejection or dislike:** is not bullying unless it involves deliberate and repeated attempts to cause distress, exclude or create dislike by others.

**Single-episode acts:** of nastiness or physical aggression are not the same as bullying. If someone is verbally abused or pushed on one occasion they are not being bullied. Nastiness or physical aggression that is directed towards many different people is not the same as bullying. However, this does not mean that single episodes of nastiness or physical aggression should be ignored or condoned as these are unacceptable behaviours.

(Taken from the 2010 DEECD resource, Building Respectful and Safe Schools: A resource for school communities)
Strategies to prevent bullying:

The key success factors that help make schools safe parallel the eight elements contained in the Effective Schools model.

**Professional leadership**

Morang South Primary School acknowledges safe and effective schools start with school leaders who are committed to a shared and well-developed vision of a safe, caring, respectful, supportive and inclusive school community, which sends clear messages that bullying and unacceptable behaviour are not tolerated.

**Focus on teaching and learning**

Morang South Primary School is a respectful and safe school, where there is a focus on the teaching and learning of interpersonal and respectful relationship skills within the domains of the Victorian Essential Learning Standards (VELS). Helping students understand the role of power, and the different uses of power in relationships will assist them to develop better relationships.

Our schools utilises specific programs such as *Friendly Kids Friendly Classrooms*, *Bounce Back!* and *You Can Do It!* programs. Morang South Primary School will continue to seek out innovative ways to tackle community issues and promote respectful behaviours and relationships.

**Purposeful teaching**

The method of teaching, or pedagogical approach, is also a key element in building our respectful and safe school environment. The *Instructional Model* provides a framework to define and promote high-quality instruction in our school. It focuses on what the teacher is doing in the classroom rather than on student behaviour. There are five phases of instruction – Engage, Explore, Explain, Elaborate and Evaluate where relationships are the basis for teaching.

In order to prepare students for the innovation and knowledge economy of the 21st century, we provide students with access to environments and information and communication technologies that increase their participation, engagement and achievement in education. The increasing use of digital technologies and the internet by children and young people highlights the importance of schools developing policies that are inclusive of digital and online environments and are explicit about the teaching of safe and responsible online behaviours. As a school we are going to pursue the development of a cyber safety team comprising interested staff, student, and parent representatives to oversee the school’s approach and initiatives to enhance cyber safety.
**Shared vision and goals**
At Morang South Primary School, the prevention and management of bullying and unacceptable behaviour is through our caring and supportive school culture. It promotes positive relationships and pro-social values. We have a clearly stated philosophy, translated into practice, that student wellbeing is a high priority underpinned by effective student learning and behaviour.

**High expectations**
There are high expectations of everyone and a culture of inclusiveness in a respectful and safe in our school. Diversity is valued and everyone is treated with respect, fairness and dignity. By teaching the values of caring, respect for difference and treating others fairly, we support students to have more positive and successful relationships now and in their adult lives.

**Learning communities**
A whole-school approach to student safety and wellbeing is paramount at Morang South Primary School. This is reflected in policies and documentation, and consistency between the perceptions of staff, students, parents and the school’s leadership team. Strategies and practices are comprehensive and embedded rather than fragmented or ‘added-on’.

**Stimulating and secure learning environments**
At Morang South Primary School, we provide both stimulating and secure learning settings where there is a culture that is firm about unacceptable behaviour and promotes intrinsic motivation providing incentives for positive behaviour. In this environment we would expect fewer students to bully or display unacceptable behaviour and fewer students who are prepared to support bullying behaviour.

**Accountability**
Processes to monitor and review policies, programs and practices are be in place at Morang South Primary School to ensure the continuous improvement of respectful and safety. Critical evaluation is undertaken of any prevention and management programs under consideration to ensure that they are theoretically sound, unbiased and evidence based in terms of content, pedagogy and delivery.

**Responding to bullying and unacceptable behaviour:**

The 2010 DEECD resource, *Building Respectful and Safe Schools: A resource for school communities* states:

Responding to bullying and unacceptable behaviour can be challenging for students, teachers, school leaders and also for parents/cares. The best outcomes are likely to occur when all parties work together to manage the situation.

There is no clear answer about the best actions students can take when they are being bullied or unacceptable behaviour is directed towards them. It can be very difficult for students to stop it on their own. Some suggested responses to students when they ask for help in the first instance are:

- ‘Try asking them calmly and politely to stop and then increase this to telling them firmly and loudly to stop’
- ‘Consider putting on a “protective shell” by acting unimpressed. If you feel up to it, make a funny comment’
- ‘Keep notes (what, who, where and when) and make sure they know’
- ‘Talk to a friend and ask for support and ideas about what you could do to solve the problem’.

If these strategies do not work, other strategies should be utilised as soon as possible. At Morang South Primary School we utilise the following effective strategies:

**Restorative practices**
Restorative practices are used to respond to incidents of bullying and unacceptable behaviour in order to repair harm to relationships. The term ‘restorative practices’ refers to a range of processes that are underpinned by the following concepts:

- misconduct is a violation of people and relationships
- these violations create obligations and liabilities
- problem-solving focuses on healing and making things right.
Restorative practices involve the development and enhancement of relationships in our school and teaching conflict resolution and other problem-solving skills. They also involve classroom management that is participatory, democratic and focused on problem-solving.

Restorative practices require a shift in philosophy from traditional punitive models of behaviour management to those relational models which, as well as holding wrongdoers accountable for their behaviour, provide support for the community affected by the wrongdoing. Three specific restorative practices are outlined below.

**Small group conferences** are
- usually confined to a small group of students or an individual student who have been involved in an incident of harm that is determined to have a less serious impact.
- Typically conferences might be used by a teacher or staff member to deal with low-level bullying before matters escalate.

Parents, while not directly involved, are informed of the process and its outcomes. Follow-up is crucial for ongoing support and to ensure compliance with the agreement.

**Classroom conferences** involve a whole class in addressing issues such as classroom bullying and more generally, classroom disruption that has affected student wellbeing and teaching and learning in the classroom.

**Community conferences**
- Bring together, in the wake of a serious incident of harm, the wrongdoer and the student being bullied or harmed, as well as their families and appropriate school personnel.
- Are conducted by a restorative practices staff member within the school
- May include a series of scripted questions directed to participants in order to understand the incident and its antecedents and the effects of the incident on the community.
- Reach an agreement is reached whereby all participants feel there has been some restitution and relationships have been repaired.

The agreement also reflects plans to meet identified needs of the participants, such as counselling, and to implement necessary changes to school policy and practice. Follow-up is crucial for ongoing support and to ensure compliance with the agreement.

The decision to use restorative practices should be made on a case by case basis as the views of those involved in an incident should be taken into consideration. Based on the circumstances of each individual incident, teachers and staff should consider whether it is appropriate to use restorative practices for matters relating to cyberbullying.

**Buddy systems**
Morang South Primary School proudly has an effective buddy systems which promote friendship and support between older and younger peers through regular collaboration, which also fosters a sense of whole-school community. The key characteristic of this buddy system is the participation of older students in positive, supportive, regular structured and facilitated one-on-one relationships with younger students. Our buddy system creates feelings of connectedness that enable both older and younger ‘buddies’ to bond more closely with their school within a psychologically safe environment, thereby increasing the likelihood of more positive school behaviour and less bullying or unacceptable behaviour.

**Code of Cooperation**
The purpose of our Code of Cooperation is to establish a school climate in which appropriate behaviour is the norm for all students. The Code of Cooperation is an evidence-based approach which promotes proactive and explicit teaching of behavioural expectations and rewarding students for following them rather than waiting for misbehaviour or unacceptable behaviour to occur before responding. The Code of Cooperation in conjunction with this Student Engagement Policy provides our school with a school improvement framework which focuses on data and enquiry to drive continuous improvement in the school’s behaviour management processes and policies. The Code of Cooperation provides our community with an effective, evidence-based approach to create a positive, safe and engaging school environment for all students, including those with behavioural difficulties. The continuum of our Code of Cooperation includes three levels of intervention:
• **Primary prevention:** universal provision of school and classroom-wide systems for all students, staff and school community members. The aim is to provide highly predictable school and classroom environments through the establishment of school-wide expectations of all members of the school community, and implementation of school-wide behaviour management strategies that focus on empowerment rather than control.

• **Secondary prevention:** specialised group systems for students who demonstrate behaviours that are concerning or not acceptable.

• **Tertiary prevention:** specialised and individualised systems of support for individual students who have not had their needs adequately met through universal and group support. This may result in individual students being referred to support agencies such as Austin Camhs or specialist settings such as Baltara.

**You Can Do It! Education**

You Can Do It! Education is a system for helping children to develop social, emotional and behavioural wellbeing. You Can Do It! Education involves a number of educational programs based on research which identifies four necessary foundations for all children to possess in order for them to achieve and experience social, emotional and behavioural wellbeing: confidence, persistence, organisation and getting along with others. Four blockers that contribute to poor psychological health, under-achievement and disaffection are also identified: low self-esteem–anxiety, general work avoidance, general disorganisation and rebelliousness–anger. More information about You Can Do It! Education is available from [http://www.youcandoiteducation.com](http://www.youcandoiteducation.com)

Morang South Primary School is also investigating and may trial these additional strategies below:

**Assertiveness training**

There is some evidence that training students to respond assertively can be a useful strategy. Responding assertively to an incident of bullying or unacceptable behaviour requires the student to be respectful towards themselves and others equally. Central to responding assertively is the student having confidence in themselves and their abilities and knowing their basic human rights. Teachers can help students to be assertive by encouraging them to:

- plan and practice responses to incidents of bullying or unacceptable behaviour in a clear and polite manner
- respond using assertive body language, that is standing up straight and keeping eye contact.

Teachers can help students to practice these behaviours though classroom-based role plays, where the students identify assertive, aggressive and passive behaviours.

**Bystander Training**

A popular strategy in the prevention of bullying and unacceptable behaviour is bystander training. This form of prevention strategy trains bystander students to behave in a supportive way to students who are being bullied or harmed, and to intervene where feasible. It is based on the notion that bad things continue to happen if good people do nothing. For students to effectively stand up for another student who is being harmed, they need to feel confident in their own skills to intervene and know they will have the support of teachers. Bystander training should build students’ skills and enable them to challenge the actions of those inflicting the harm.

In addition, training should stress to all students that they are expected to act responsibly and either challenge the bullying and unacceptable behaviour directly or indirectly and report the incident to a teacher. Bystander action is particularly effective in incidents of cyberbullying, such as sending a supportive email or message to the person being bullied.

When developing bystander training modules, teachers can:

- elicit from students how they think they would react if they were observers of a bullying incident and ask students to give a reason for their reaction
- at the next lesson, feed back to them the results, reading out what students have said about why and how they would help the student being bullied
- discuss how students might distinguish between dangerous and nondangerous situations - and take appropriate action
- discuss what forms of discouragement could be effective without inflaming the situation
- discuss how students might get others to voice their disapproval together
• rehearse possible scenarios and actions using role-plays
• monitor what happens by getting the class to periodically review bystander strategies.

**Friendly Schools and Families program**

*Friendly Schools and Families* is a whole-school bullying reduction program, initially implemented as part of a research project in 20 primary schools in Perth between 2002 and 2004. Almost 4000 students and their families, and 450 teachers, took part in the program. The research identified the elements that resulted in the greatest reduction of bullying and these findings form the basis of the program. The basic assumption behind the program is that effectiveness in reducing bullying and increasing pro-social behaviour is the result of many small moves, not just one approach. Some of the key components of the program are:

• open communication about bullying with families and the whole-school community
• a consistent and positive response from all teachers towards bullying behaviour
• teaching peer support skills to enable all students in a bystander role to discourage bullying
• teaching resilience skills that could be employed if students were bullied
• modified playground environments that are more stimulating for students
• teaching social skills and pro-social values
• high visibility of playground supervisors during lunch and recess breaks
• school pride campaigns
• teacher professional development.

The program aims to assist with the design, development, implementation, dissemination and evaluation of social skill-building and comprehensive antibullying programs in schools. It provides templates to evaluate current antibullying policy and practice, review action taken, identify areas that may require further attention, and help schools engage in evidence-based activities to reduce bullying. Support and guidance can also be accessed through the program. More information about this program is available from [http://www.friendlyschools.com.au](http://www.friendlyschools.com.au)

**Other programs which may be considered** M-Power Girls, Kidsmatter, Mindmatters, BarNone Community Awareness Kit for Schools.

★★ Promoting cyber safety and preventing cyberbullying

The internet and digital technologies are now very much a part of life and learning. As an increasingly interactive medium, digital technologies bring with them exciting new opportunities to engage children and young people in their learning. At the same time these technologies also bring some risks. Increasingly schools, and Morang South Primary School is no exception, are dealing with incidents of cyberbullying or unacceptable behaviour that have occurred in the online world or using technology such as mobile phones. The implementation of specific cyber safety initiatives in our school supports the safety and wellbeing of students and contributes to the prevention of cyberbullying or unacceptable behaviour via technology. Our holistic approach to the respectful and safe use of information and communication technologies includes:

• policies and procedures within the school’s Student Engagement Policy to encourage cybersafe behaviour across the school including Acceptable Use Agreements
• access to professional learning opportunities for teachers
• specific teaching of the safe use of technologies for students
• internet safety awareness information or presentations for parents.

Morang South Primary School plays an active role in promoting the safe use of digital technologies by:

• encouraging students to not communicate with strangers online
• warning against providing a mobile phone number to a stranger
• cautioning against adding strangers as friends on social networking websites
• encouraging students to immediately report concerns of online stranger danger to parents/carers, teachers or another adult
• explaining why students should not send, or participate in, the production or forwarding of abusive or offensive digital materials.
The Department provides a website ‘Learning On Line’ with policy advice, resources, classroom activities and professional learning actions to support the safe and responsible use of digital technologies. This can be accessed at http://www.education.vic.gov.au/learningonline. Morang South Primary School intends to investigate further frameworks to complement classroom teaching and learning and promote cyber safety. These could include frameworks such as eSmart, programs such as SuperClubsPLUS Australia and CyberS@vvy, and professional learning available through the Australian Communications and Media Authority and ThinkUKnow.

It should be noted that incidents of offensive or suspicious online behaviour should be reported to the Australian Communications and Media Authority or the Australian Federal Police depending on the nature of the behaviour. Information about reporting problematic behaviour is available at http://www.cybersmart.gov.au/Report.aspx.

Responding to incidents that have a serious impact on individuals or the school

Incidents of bullying and unacceptable behaviour do happen and these can have a serious impact on individuals or the school. In these instances, it is important that schools have clear response procedures in place. Incidents of bullying or unacceptable behaviour may be deemed a critical incident, particularly if the incident has a serious impact on individuals or the school. Deciding whether an incident has had or may have a serious impact on individuals or the school is often a matter of professional judgement by the principal or their delegate. Victorian government schools are required to report particular categories of incidents to the Department’s Emergency and Security Management Unit and the police if the nature of the incident may constitute a criminal offence. Reportable incidents include:

- allegations of serious sexual or physical assault of a student, staff member or a visitor. As a general rule, a serious incident is one requiring medical attention (physical assault) or a police investigation (sexual assault)
- criminal activity, burglary, theft, vandalism and graffiti and minor property damage
- serious threats made against a student, staff member or visitor
- student, staff member or visitor behaviour that could result in potential risk to another student, staff member or visitor

It should be noted that incidents away from the school must also be reported such as those occurring during camps, excursions or outdoor adventure activities, travel to or from school, non school hours and weekends and holidays. If a school is unsure whether an incident is a reportable incident, the Department’s Emergency and Security Management Unit should be consulted by the Principal or delegate. It may also be necessary for schools to seek advice from the Department’s Student Critical Incident Advisory Unit which ensures appropriate supports are in place to maximise the safety and wellbeing of students involved in sexually based incidents including online incidents. Further guidance for schools can be accessed at http://www.education.vic.gov.au/healthwellbeing/safety/childprotection/default.htm.

Preparation

At Morang South Primary School we have an Emergency Management Plan which included agreed policies, strategies and procedures for critical incidents. The staff are briefed on the critical incident response action plans for serious incidents and are consequently confident about supporting the people affected.

Response

Morang South Primary School ensure that the level of response is appropriate to the incident, avoiding secondary problems. Specialist support professionals such as Primary Welfare Officers, Student Welfare Coordinators and Student Support Services are used to assist our school to identify the most appropriate response.

Most incidents of bullying or unacceptable behaviour will not have a serious impact on individuals or the school and should be managed as quickly and effectively as possible guided by the school’s Student Engagement Policy as well as restorative practices such as the no blame approach, the method of shared concern or a formal apology.

When there are incidents that have a serious impact on individuals or the school, the DEECD have developed a supportive flowchart which provides guidance on appropriate steps to take. (Refer to page 19) This flowchart will be considered alongside the school’s own critical incident response plan.

The rights of those involved should be supported while acknowledging the needs of the particular situation. Consequences should be activated in accordance with the school’s Student Engagement Policy.

Restoring wellbeing
Morang South Primary School concurs that repairing and rebuilding trust and relationships is essential following an incident that has had a serious impact on individuals or the school. Restorative practices are most effective in resolving issues and restore the sense of wellbeing for all involved. Strategies to restore wellbeing include:

- providing debriefing and support for those involved
- regularly monitoring the behaviour of the people involved in the incident
- ensuring that the person who was harmed has a clear plan to report any further concerns to someone they have chosen
- providing the opportunity for staff to have their questions answered and to talk about the incident among themselves if it has affected a broader group or the whole school
- enabling parents of the students involved to have the opportunity to discuss the incident with staff
- using specialist support staff – Primary Welfare Officers, Student Welfare Coordinators, Chaplains, Student Support Services Officers, Secondary School Nurses and other health and wellbeing professionals employed by schools to assist staff, students and parents in the medium to long-term
- reviewing incidents and implementing improvements to school responses and policies.

Advice for parents and carers:

There are a range of suggested actions that parents/carers can utilise when their children are being bullied or are bullying or harming others. Please refer to the 2010 DEECD resource, Building Respectful and Safe Schools: A resource for school communities link below:

Section 6: School Actions and Consequences

Appropriate Behaviour

Morang South PS acknowledges students who meet the shared expectations outlined in this policy through recognition and encouragement as outlined below.

Inappropriate Behaviour

When students do not meet these expectations, a staged response is implemented consistent with the logical consequences outlined below.

Where possible, a restorative approach is used to address student behaviour in various settings and levels to:

- Re-establish significant relationships
- Ensure consequences for misbehaviour are relevant and meaningful
- Foster and develop individual responsibility and empathy

LOGICAL CONSEQUENCES refer to Code of Cooperation page 24

Suspension and expulsion is perceived as a last resort.

When considering suspension or expulsion, schools are required to follow the procedures listed in section 4.3 of the DEECD guidelines published in Effective Schools are Engaging Schools Student Engagement Policy Guidelines. Appendices 12 to 18 of the guidelines provide flowcharts and proformas for use in suspension and expulsion procedures.
Appendix
Student Code of Cooperation
Student Code of Cooperation

This Code of Cooperation has been formulated within and is consistent with Department of Education and Training guidelines and regulations. It reflects our commitment to the school’s Mission, Vision and Values.

**Our Values are:** RESPECT LEARNING TRUST HONESTY CARING TOLERANCE COOPERATION

Our code of cooperation at Morang South PS has been developed as part of our Student Engagement policy.

- This code of cooperation aims to foster a healthy school culture, where an open, welcoming and safe environment promotes high levels of achievement.
- The overall intention of the code of cooperation is for students to make appropriate choices and take responsibility for their learning and behaviour.
- We see optimal learning and appropriate behaviour as being a shared responsibility between home and school.
- Our school community will work together to reflect and demonstrate the Values of our school.
- The main purpose of the code of cooperation is to provide an environment where every member of our school community has right.

These rights are:

**Everyone has the right to work and learn.**

**Everyone has the right to feel safe and comfortable.**

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

*These rights are displayed in every room across the school.

**MAIN ELEMENTS OF THE PROGRAM:**

- Teachers at each level will implement the agreed strategy for the way they are going to operate in the classroom. This includes use of a school wide planned approach for recognising and responding to appropriate behaviours that reflect our values and a step-wise plan for responding to inappropriate behaviour.
- Each teacher, in conjunction with the children, will develop a classroom agreement. This will go home to be signed by parents.
- The development of positive relationships between teachers and students is the core to this policy
- Through the promotion of personal and communal responsibility students are encouraged to take responsibility for their actions and as a result develop intrinsic fulfillment
- A response to behaviours, including verbal and non verbal hints and a staged conversation will be used to encourage appropriate behaviours
- Individual behaviour modification plans will be developed for children when necessary
- Behaviour management procedures will be implemented calmly and consistently
- New and relieving teachers coming into the school will receive assistance to develop classroom plans and to implement our Code of Cooperation.
CONSEQUENCES FOR APPROPRIATE CHOICES:

Students will be encouraged to develop intrinsic appreciation for making the right choices and acting appropriately. Appropriate behaviour will also be acknowledged through:

- Reports
- Star of the Week awards
- Newsletter
- Leadership opportunities
- Positive feedback
- The right to represent the school
- Special assemblies
- Presentations at assembly

CONSEQUENCES FOR INAPPROPRIATE CHOICES:

(Please refer to the flow chart for Classroom Developmental Behaviour Management Process page 34)

Non verbal hints

Verbal hints

Choice conversations

Sent to time out class

Complete ‘Make It Right’ reflection sheet (Please refer to page 38-9)

Choice

Sent to Principal/ Assistant Principal/ etc

Restorative conversations are an essential part of this process and will take place when child returns to the classroom or at a time negotiated with the teacher. (Please refer to the flow charts pages 35 & 36)

A record of behaviour will be maintained by classroom teachers and teams using the Behaviour Log. (Please refer to page 37) These behaviours may impact on the student’s right to participate in extra curricula activities.

These records of behaviour will be available to be discussed, evaluated and reflected upon by the principal and assistant principal

At this stage the “Serious Consequence” will continue to be used however this is gradually being phased out. It is anticipated that the ‘Make It Right’ reflection sheet and the Behaviour Log will eventually replace the “Serious Consequence” resulting in a more restorative practice

OTHER IMPORTANT ASPECTS TO NOTE

Detention/Suspension:

Detention and or Suspension will be given according to DEECD guidelines and at the discretion of the teacher, assistant principal or principal. (refer to Student Engagement Policy)
Playground Behaviour:

In 2011, a Developmental Behaviour Management Process for outside will be drafted, trialled and implemented in consultation with staff, students and parents. This process will be based on Ramon Lewis’ research and similar to our Classroom Behaviour Management Process on page 34.

Bullying

The 2010 DEECD resource, Building Respectful and Safe Schools: A resource for school communities supports schools to prevent and respond to bullying and all forms of unacceptable behaviour including harassment. This publication defines bullying as the following:

- Bullying is when someone, or a group of people, deliberately upset or hurt another person or damage their property, reputation or social acceptance on more than one occasion. There is an imbalance of power in incidents of bullying with the bully or bullies having more power at the time due to age, size, status or other reasons. (Page 7)

- There are four types of bullying:
  - Direct Physical Bullying
  - Direct Verbal Bullying
  - Indirect Bullying
  - Cyber bullying

What bullying is not

Many distressing behaviours are not examples of bullying even though they are unpleasant and often require teacher intervention and management.

**Mutual Conflict:** involves and argument or disagreement between people but not an imbalance of power. Both parties are upset and usually both want a resolution. Unresolved mutual conflict can develop into bullying if one of the parties targets the other repeatedly in retaliation.

**Social rejection or dislike:** is not bullying unless it involves deliberate and repeated attempts to cause distress, exclude or create dislike by others.

**Single-episode acts:** of nastiness or physical aggression are not the same as bullying. If someone is verbally abused or pushed on one occasion they are not being bullied. Nastiness or physical aggression that is directed towards many different people is not the same as bullying. However, this does not mean that single episodes of nastiness or physical aggression should be ignored or condoned as these are unacceptable behaviours.

(Taken from the 2010 DEECD resource, Building Respectful and Safe Schools: A resource for school communities)
Creating respectful and safe schools

Strategies to prevent bullying:

The key success factors that help make schools safe parallel the eight elements contained in the Effective Schools model.

Professional leadership
Safe and effective schools start with school leaders who are committed to a shared and well-developed vision of a safe, caring, respectful, supportive and inclusive school community. At Morang South Primary School, we aim to send a clear message that bullying and unacceptable behaviour are not tolerated.

Focus on teaching and learning
At Morang South Primary School, there is a focus on the teaching and learning of interpersonal and respectful relationship skills within the domains of the Victorian Essential Learning Standards (VELS). Helping students understand the role of power, and the different uses of power in relationships will assist them to develop better relationships.

Many schools utilise specific programs such as Friendly Kids Friendly Classrooms, Bounce Back!, You Can Do It!, M-Power Girls, Kidsmatter, Mindmatters, BarNone Community Awareness Kit for Schools and personal safety or ProtectiveBehaviours programs. A number of schools across Victoria have implemented demonstration programs with a focus on respectful relationships. The No Regrets demonstration program focuses on the prevention of alcohol-related violence in the community and a prevention of gender-based violence demonstration program has also commenced. These are examples of the innovative ways in which schools are tackling community issues and promoting respectful behaviours and relationships.

Purposeful teaching
The method of teaching, or pedagogical approach, is also a key element in building a respectful and safe school environment at Morang South Primary School. The e5 Instructional Model provides a framework to define and promote high-quality instruction in Victorian government schools that focuses on what the teacher is doing in the classroom rather than on student behaviour. In each of the five phases of instruction – Engage, Explore, Explain, Elaborate and Evaluate – relationship-based pedagogy is essential. Curriculum guidance and advice is also available to support schools to implement curriculum that teaches and promotes interpersonal skills and respectful relationships in line with the domains of the VELS. This guidance builds on current good practice across Victoria and is available at http://www.education.vic.gov.au/respect. In order to prepare students for the innovation and knowledge economy of the 21st century, schools must provide students with access to environments and information and communication technologies that increase their participation, engagement and achievement in education. The increasing use of digital technologies and the internet by children and young people highlights the importance of schools developing policies that are inclusive of digital and online environments and are explicit about the teaching of safe and responsible online behaviours. Schools can refer to http://www.education.vic.gov.au/learningonline for further information about cyber safety. Many schools have established cyber safety teams comprising interested staff, student, and parent representatives to oversee the school’s approach and initiatives to enhance cyber safety.
Shared vision and goals
The prevention and management of bullying and unacceptable behaviour in schools is more readily achieved in a caring and supportive school culture that promotes positive relationships and pro-social values. In respectful and safe schools there is a clearly stated philosophy, translated into practice, that student wellbeing is a high priority underpinned by effective student learning and behaviour.

High expectations
There are high expectations of everyone and a culture of inclusiveness in a respectful and safe school. Diversity is valued and everyone is treated with respect, fairness and dignity. Perceptions of difference can be part of why bullying and unacceptable behaviour occurs and students may be picked on because they seem to be different. Schools teaching the values of caring, respect for difference and treating others fairly support students to have more positive and successful relationships now and in their adult lives.

Learning communities
A whole-school approach to student safety and wellbeing is a key characteristic of effective schools. This is reflected in policies and documentation, and consistency between the perceptions of staff, students, parents and the school’s leadership team. Strategies and practices are comprehensive and embedded rather than fragmented or ‘added-on’.

Stimulating and secure learning environments
Respectful and safe schools provide both stimulating and secure learning settings where there is a culture that is firm about unacceptable behaviour and provides incentives for positive behaviour. In such environments fewer students bully or display unacceptable behaviour and fewer students are prepared to support bullying behaviour.

Accountability
Processes to monitor and review policies, programs and practices should be in place to ensure the continuous improvement of respectful and safe schools. Critical evaluation should also be undertaken of any prevention and management programs under consideration to ensure that they are theoretically sound, unbiased and evidence based in terms of content, pedagogy and delivery.

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bond more closely with their school within a psychologically safe environment, thereby increasing the likelihood of more positive school behaviour and less bullying or unacceptable behaviour.

**School-wide – positive behaviour support**
The purpose of School-wide – positive behaviour support (SWPBS) is to establish a school climate in which appropriate behaviour is the norm for all students. SWPBS is an evidence-based approach which promotes proactive and explicit teaching of behavioural expectations and rewarding students for following them rather than waiting for misbehaviour or unacceptable behaviour to occur before responding. It provides schools with a school improvement framework which focuses on data and enquiry to drive continuous improvement in the school’s behaviour management processes and policies. SW-PBS provides school communities with an effective, evidence-based approach to creating positive, safe and engaging school environments for all students, including those with behavioural difficulties. The continuum of SW-PBS includes three levels of intervention:

- **Primary prevention**: universal provision of school and classroom-wide systems for all students, staff and school community members. The aim is to provide highly predictable school and classroom environments through the establishment of school-wide expectations of all members of the school community, and implementation of school-wide behaviour management strategies that focus on empowerment rather than control

- **Secondary prevention**: specialised group systems for students who demonstrate behaviours that are concerning or not acceptable

- **Tertiary prevention**: specialised and individualised systems of support for individual students who have not had their needs adequately met through universal and group support.

**You Can Do It! Education**
*You Can Do It! Education* is a system for helping children to develop social, emotional and behavioural wellbeing. *You Can Do It! Education* involves a number of educational programs based on research which identifies four necessary foundations for all children to possess in order for them to achieve and experience social, emotional and behavioural wellbeing: confidence, persistence, organisation and getting along with others. Four blockers that contribute to poor psychological health, under-achievement and disaffection are also identified: low self-esteem–anxiety, general work avoidance, general disorganisation and rebelliousness–anger. More information about *You Can Do It! Education* is available from [http://www.youcandoiteducation.com](http://www.youcandoiteducation.com)

Morang SOuth Primary School is also investigating and will soon be trialling these additional strategies:

**Assertiveness training**
There is some evidence that training students to respond assertively can be a useful strategy. Responding assertively to an incident of bullying or unacceptable behaviour requires the student to be respectful towards themselves and others equally. Central to responding assertively is the student having confidence in themselves and their abilities and knowing their basic human rights. Teachers can help students to be assertive by encouraging them to:

- plan and practice responses to incidents of bullying or unacceptable behaviour in a clear and polite manner
- respond using assertive body language, that is standing up straight and keeping eye contact.

Teachers can help students to practice these behaviours though classroom-based roleplays, where the students identify assertive, aggressive and passive behaviours.

**Bystander training**
A popular strategy in the prevention of bullying and unacceptable behaviour is bystander training. This form of prevention strategy trains bystander students to behave in a supportive way to students who are being bullied or harmed, and to intervene where feasible. It is based on the notion that bad things continue to happen if good people do nothing. For students to effectively stand up for another student who is being harmed, they need to feel confident in their own skills to intervene and know they will have the support of teachers. Bystander training should build students’ skills and enable them to challenge the actions of those inflicting the harm.

In addition, training should stress to all students that they are expected to act responsibly and either challenge the bullying and unacceptable behaviour directly or indirectly and report the incident to a teacher. Bystander action is particularly effective in incidents of cyberbullying, such as sending a supportive email or message to the person being bullied.
When developing bystander training modules, teachers can:

- elicit from students how they think they would react if they were observers of a bullying incident and ask students to give a reason for their reaction
- at the next lesson, feed back to them the results, reading out what students have said about why and how they would help the student being bullied
- discuss how students might distinguish between dangerous and nondangerous situations – and take appropriate action
- discuss what forms of discouragement could be effective without inflaming the situation
- discuss how students might get others to voice their disapproval together
- rehearse possible scenarios and actions using role-plays
- monitor what happens by getting the class to periodically review bystander strategies

Promoting cyber safety  and preventing cyberbullying

The internet and digital technologies are now very much a part of life and learning. As an increasingly interactive medium, digital technologies bring with them exciting new opportunities to engage children and young people in their learning. At the same time these technologies also bring some risks. Increasingly schools are dealing with incidents of cyberbullying or unacceptable behaviour that have occurred in the online world or using technology such as mobile phones. The implementation of specific cyber safety initiatives in schools supports the safety and wellbeing of students and contributes to the prevention of cyberbullying or unacceptable behaviour via technology. A holistic approach to the respectful and safe use of information and communication technologies should include:

- policies and procedures within the school’s Student Engagement Policy to encourage cybersafe behaviour across the school including Acceptable Use Agreements
- access to professional learning opportunities for teachers
- specific teaching of the safe use of technologies for students
- internet safety awareness information or presentations for parents.

Schools can play an active role in promoting the safe use of digital technologies by:

- encouraging students to not communicate with strangers online
- warning against providing a mobile phone number to a stranger
- cautioning against adding strangers as friends on social networking websites
- encouraging students to immediately report concerns of online stranger danger to parents/carers, teachers or another adult
- explaining why students should not send, or participate in, the production or forwarding of abusive or offensive digital materials.

The Department provides a website ‘Learning On Line’ with policy advice, resources, classroom activities and professional learning actions to support the safe and responsible use of digital technologies. This can be accessed at http://www.education.vic.gov.au/learningonline. Some schools have also implemented a range of approaches to complement classroom teaching and learning and promote cyber safety. These include frameworks such as eSmart, programs such as SuperClubsPLUS Australia and CyberS@vvy, and professional learning available through the Australian Communications and Media Authority and ThinkUKnow. It should be noted that incidents of offensive or suspicious online behaviour should be reported to the Australian Communications and Media Authority or the Australian Federal Police depending on the nature of the behaviour. Information about reporting problematic behaviour is available at http://www.cybersmart.gov.au/Report.aspx

Responding to incidents that have a serious impact on individuals or the school
Incidents of bullying and unacceptable behaviour do happen and these can have a serious impact on individuals or the school. In these instances, it is important that schools have clear response procedures in place. Incidents of bullying or unacceptable behaviour may be deemed a critical incident, particularly if the incident has a serious impact on individuals or the school. Deciding whether an incident has had or may have a serious impact on individuals or the school is often a matter of professional judgement by the principal or their delegate. Victorian government schools are required to report particular categories of incidents to the Department’s Emergency and Security Management Unit and the police if the nature of the incident may constitute a criminal offence. Reportable incidents include:

- allegations of serious sexual or physical assault of a student, staff member or a visitor. As a general rule, a serious incident is one requiring medical attention (physical assault) or a police investigation (sexual assault)
- criminal activity, burglary, theft, vandalism and graffiti and minor property damage
- serious threats made against a student, staff member or visitor
- student, staff member or visitor behaviour that could result in potential risk to another student, staff member or visitor

It should be noted that incidents away from the school must also be reported such as those occurring during camps, excursions or outdoor adventure activities, travel to or from school, non school hours and weekends and holidays. If a school is unsure whether an incident is a reportable incident, the Department’s Emergency and Security Management Unit should be consulted and can be contacted on phone: (03) 9589 6266. It may also be necessary for schools to seek advice from the Department’s Student Critical Incident Advisory Unit which ensures appropriate supports are in place to maximise the safety and wellbeing of students involved in sexually based incidents including online incidents. Further guidance for schools can be accessed at http://www.education.vic.gov.au/healthwellbeing/safety/childprotection/default.htm

**Preparation**

Prior to responding to incidents that have a serious impact on individuals or the school, it is essential to ensure that the school has developed and implemented agreed policies, strategies and procedures for incidents of this nature. Staff should be briefed on the critical incident response action plans for serious incidents and be confident about supporting the people affected.

**Response**

It is important to ensure that the level of response is appropriate to the incident and to avoid secondary problems arising from not dealing with incidents, dealing with them ineffectively or in a manner disproportionate to the incident. Specialist support professionals such as Primary Welfare Officers, Student Welfare Coordinators and Student Support Services can assist schools in identifying the most appropriate response. Most incidents of bullying or unacceptable behaviour will not have a serious impact on individuals or the school and should be managed as quickly and effectively as possible guided by the school’s Student Engagement Policy as well as restorative practices such as the no blame approach, the method of shared concern or a formal apology. When there are incidents that have a serious impact on individuals or the school, the flowchart on page 29 provides guidance on appropriate steps to take. This flowchart should be considered alongside the school’s own critical incident response plan. The rights of those involved should be supported while acknowledging the needs of the particular situation. Consequences should be activated in accordance with the school’s Student Engagement Policy.

**Restoring wellbeing**
Repairing and rebuilding trust and relationships is essential following an incident that has had a serious impact on individuals or the school. Restorative practices are most effective in resolving issues and restore the sense of wellbeing for all involved. Strategies to restore wellbeing include:

- providing debriefing and support for those involved
- regularly monitoring the behaviour of the people involved in the incident
- ensuring that the person who was harmed has a clear plan to report any further concerns to someone they have chosen
- providing the opportunity for staff to have their questions answered and to talk about the incident among themselves if it has affected a broader group or the whole school
- enabling parents of the students involved to have the opportunity to discuss the incident with staff
- using specialist support staff – Primary Welfare Officers, Student Welfare Coordinators, Chaplains, Student Support Services Officers, Secondary School Nurses and other health and wellbeing professionals employed by schools to assist staff, students and parents in the medium to long-term
- reviewing incidents and implementing improvements to school responses and policies.
Advice for parents and carers:
There are a range of suggested actions that parents/carers can utilise when their children are being bullied or are bullying or harming others. Please refer to the 2010 DEECD resource, Building Respectful and Safe Schools: A resource for school communities link below:


Useful Resources:

Disclaimer: The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, including Morang South Primary School provides these sources as information only. The Department does not necessarily endorse their content.

Websites for Teachers/Parents/Carers
Anti-Bullying Network (Scotland) http://www.antibullying.net/
Bullying.org (Canada) http://www.bullying.org/
Bullying UK (United Kingdom) http://www.bullying.co.uk/
Bullying UK (United Kingdom) http://www.bullying.co.uk/
Family – School and Community Partnerships Bureau (Australia) http://www.familyschool.org.au
Kidscape (United Kingdom) http://www.kidscape.org.uk/
No Bully (New Zealand) http://www.police.govt.nz/service/yes/nobully/
Safe Caring and Orderly Schools (Canada) http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/sco/resources.htm
Stop Bullying Me (Canada) http://www.stopbullyingme.ab.ca/
Stop Bullying Now (United States) http://www.stopbullyingnow.com/
The Australian Research Centre in Sex, Health and Society (Australia) http://www.latrobe.edu.au/arcsrhs/

Websites for students

Websites on cyber-safety and cyberbullying
Australian Communications and Media Authority Cyber safety Website (Australia) http://www.cybersmart.gov.au/
Australian Federal Policy and Microsoft Australia ThinkUKnow internet safety program (Australia) http://www.thinkuknow.org.au/site/index.asp
CyberBullying UK (United Kingdom) http://cyberbullying.co.uk/
Cyberbullying.ca (Canada) http://www.cyberbullying.ca/

Books
Maines, B. and Robinson, G. (1992), Michael’s story: The ‘No Blame’ Approach,
Lame Duck Publishing, Bristol.
McGrath, H. and Noble, T. (eds.) (2005), Bullying Solutions: Evidence-based Approaches to Bullying in Australian Schools, Pearson Education, Sydney.
Classroom Developmental Behaviour Management Process

Non-verbal hints: Teacher points to poster to remind student of appropriate behaviour.

Verbal hints: Teacher begins conversation with student to remind student of appropriate behaviour.

Verbal hints: Teacher begins conversation with student to remind student of appropriate behaviour.

Back on task

Choice conversation
(And student is moved to a different place in own classroom)

Removal to Withdrawal class
(Student completes 'Make it right' reflection sheet)

Choice conversation

Removal to Mrs Jones/Mrs Young/Mrs McLaren

Return to Class

Return conversation/Restorative Practice and...

- Teacher & student review (or provide time for student to complete) ‘Make it right’ reflection sheet
- Teacher records incident in Class Behaviour Log
- Teacher copies & sends ‘Make it right’ reflection sheet home (student will take home or the teacher will post if necessary)
- The next day, the teacher collects the ‘Make it right’ return slip and records in student’s Behaviour Log.
- If ‘Make it right’ return slip is not received- the teacher will follow up with a phone call. (Documented in behaviour log)
Ramon Lewis conversation/verbal hint

1. **Nominate the student** (move closer to student)
   - David...
   - You with the scissors.....

2. **Indicate the inappropriate behaviour**
   - You’re constant talking.....
   - You’re moving around the room....

3. **Indicate why the behaviour is inappropriate**
   - Is preventing others from learning.....
   - Is disrupting the work of these three students....
   - That’s really dangerous, everyone has the right to be safe...

4. **Indicate the appropriate behaviour**
   - Therefore please be quiet.....(Not could you or I’m asking you-no questions- give the direction)
   - Therefore please sit here where you won’t be tempted....
   - Next time please...
   If need be:
   - I understand but................ state the appropriate behaviour
   - I hear you but ................... state the appropriate behaviour

**CHOICE**  You’ve got a choice you’re either ______________ or ___________

Eg. If you’re not prepared to work over here you will have to sit over there *(in the classroom)*

**BUDDY CLASS**  If still going....  Name, you’ll have to leave now. Please go to HG__.

**CHOICE**  If they won’t leave...You’ve got a choice your either leave and go to _______ or I’ll have to ask Mrs Jones/Mrs Young/Mrs McLaren to come and get you.

**removal**  If they still won’t leave...I can’t make you but I’m going to have to ask Mrs Jones/Mrs Young/Mrs McLaren to come and get you. Your choice is...

Return Conversation

**Initial:**  ▪ I’m glad your back. ▪ I hope you’re ready to make the right choice now.
▪ We’ll talk later at __________. E.g. lunch eating time.

**Later:**  ▪ Before you were........it was inappropriate. ▪ Why was it inappropriate? (Student must agree they’ve done something wrong) ▪ Now, let’s evaluate your ‘reflection sheet’.
The process for dealing with students who demonstrate “D” behaviour

The student is exhibiting behaviour that can no longer be managed in the room or playground. The student is refusing to go to buddy class or teacher, they are enraged and/or irrational and the only option is to be collected and removed. These students seem unmanageable no matter what is tried and need to be collected by Mrs Jones, Mrs Young or Mrs McLaren.

Student is collected from either the class or the yard by Mrs Jones, Mrs Young or Mrs McLaren.

There will be time to allow the student to calm down before effective restorative conversations are held regarding the unacceptable behaviour. There will be an emphasis on the student accepting responsibility for their actions and 'making it right.'

- Student has restorative conversation with Julie, Sandi or Kaye
- Student accepts responsibility taken for actions and makes it right with appropriate people.
- Student returned to classroom with return conversation and “Make it right” reflection sheet completed to be sent home with student.
- Teacher involved calls parents.

Staged response based on response of student and severity of behaviour exhibited

- Time Out Buddy Room
- Parent contacted to collect student
- ½ Day in-school suspension
- Whole day in school suspension
- Out of school suspension
- ** Expulsion
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<th>Behaviour Observed</th>
<th>Action Taken</th>
<th>Comment</th>
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What happened? Where and when did it happen? (e.g. Chris took my ball)

What did I want? How did I feel? (E.g. angry, upset)

What MSPS value didn’t I show?
- Respect
- Learning
- Trust
- Honesty
- Caring
- Tolerance
- Cooperation

What MSPS right didn’t I show?
- Everyone has the right to feel safe and comfortable.
- Everyone has the right to learn and work.

How did the other person feel?

What could I have done instead of not living by the school values and rights?

Three things I can do to fix things up:
1.
2.
3.

What should be the consequence of this action?
Student Suggestion: Teacher Decision:

Dear Parents,
Please discuss the above incident with your child and return this section to school. If you would like to discuss the matter with me please contact me at school.

Thank you for your support.
Yours sincerely,

Parent/Guardian Signature ......................................... Date .......................  
Child’s Name ........................................................ Home group:
Make it Right!  Name: ___________________  Home group: ____  Date: _________

What happened?

What did you want?

How can I make it right?

What MSPS value didn’t I show?

Respect  □  Learning  □  Trust  □  Honesty  □  Caring  □  Tolerance  □  Cooperation  □

What MSPS right did I fail to show?

☐ Everyone has the right to feel safe and comfortable.
☐ Everyone has the right to learn and work.

What should the consequences be?

What will you do next time?

Teacher: _____________________________  Date: __________

Dear Parents,
Please discuss the above incident with your child and return this section to school. If you would like to discuss the matter with me please contact me at school.

Thank you for your support.
Yours sincerely,

Parent/Guardian Signature  ___________________________  Date ________________
Child’s Name  ___________________________  Home group: __________