Westgarth Primary School

STUDENT ENGAGEMENT AND INCLUSION POLICY

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Rationale

Creating and maintaining respectful and safe school environments is a priority for the Department of Education and Training. At Westgarth Primary School we are committed to implementing a shared approach to supporting the health, wellbeing, inclusion and engagement of all students, including building teachers' understandings of positive behaviour support and engagement practices, and ensuring students have the tools and skills to develop positive and self-regulating behaviours. We are committed to ensuring that all parents, carers and families are valued partners in their child's learning and development. Students are supported to have a voice in the learning process, fully and proudly participate in school life and have a greater say in the decisions that affect their learning and their lives at school.

Aims

- Provide students with a stimulating curriculum that challenges their learning and maintains regular school attendance in a safe and respectful environment where teachers and families work in partnership for the benefit of all students
- Develop students' social behaviours that enable them to establish and maintain a range of positive social relationships; manage interpersonal difficulties and refrain from harming others or self, and interact collaboratively and constructively within the school and wider community
- Maintain a school environment based on positive behaviour, mutual respect and cooperation
- Implement a whole school behaviour process that is simple, clear, and consistent and leads to developing student responsibility throughout the primary school years
- Manage inappropriate student behaviour in a positive, restorative and professional manner
- Prevent bullying and harassment of students
- To assist families and the school to have strong collaborative partnerships in student's learning through mutually respectful relationships founded on trust and confidence.

Implementation

1. School Profile

Westgarth Primary School is a vibrant school community located in the inner city suburb of Northcote. Our focus is on providing an engaging and differentiated curriculum to our 648 students. Our staff comprises three principal class officers, two leading teachers, 29 classroom teachers, eight specialist teachers covering five learning areas, seven education support staff and a part-time first aid officer.

The school has two sites. The Brooke Street junior site houses prep to year 2, computer lab, and administration and staff facilities. The larger site, Clarke Street, houses years 3 to 6, specialist facilities (gym, music, art, kitchen garden), and a kindergarten (run separately from the school, but on school land). Both sites have buildings in good condition and grounds which are well maintained. The buildings vary from older 1970s open-plan learning spaces to recently constructed learning studio spaces. While there are relocatable buildings on both sites, these are integrated and well-resourced, functional teaching and learning spaces. Westgarth Primary operates its own before and After Care facility with space for 180 students each afternoon.

In addition to a focus on literacy, numeracy and social development, the curriculum features inquiry-based learning, a sustainability focus, specialist classes in music, language, art, PE/sport, and a Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden program. The school language program is Spanish. The Spanish program is implemented through the content and language integrated learning (CLIL) methodology. The Spanish program is currently integrated with visual arts, science and performing arts. There is a school production every two years and annual camps at years 4 and 6.

We have an exciting array of extra-curricular activities including an after-hours extension and enrichment program 'Reaching for the Stars', Super Science Club, Coding Club, Chess classes and instrumental music lessons. We also have an extensive range of physical education and sporting opportunities that go beyond a traditional PE program and includes orienteering and triathlon.

Westgarth Primary School has an active parent community, who contribute to the educational outcomes of our students through the organisation of, and participation in, various programs and events. They also strengthen the school community through fundraising initiatives including the annual fete, social events and through their valued membership on School Council's subcommittees and working parties. There is a highly supportive and engaged School Council with a focus on good governance. A Parents and Friends Club was formed in 2015 and has established itself as a dynamic and supportive addition to the school community.

The four-year School Strategic Plan is on the school website: http://www.wgps.vic.edu.au/page/191

2. School Values, Philosophy and Vision

Our school is committed in the pursuit of life-long learning, environmental sustainability, and positive social, emotional and physical wellbeing. We aim to provide a safe, secure and stimulating learning environment for all students. Students can only reach their full educational potential when they are happy, healthy and safe, and when there is a positive school culture to engage and support them in their learning. Our school acknowledges that student wellbeing and student learning outcomes are inextricably linked.

Our school is also committed to preventing and addressing bullying, including cyberbullying. Please see our eSmart/Cyber Bullying Prevention policy for more information.

Our philosophy:
Every member of the school community has a right to fully participate in an educational environment that is safe, supportive and inclusive.

Our Purpose:
Westgarth Primary School's mission is to 'Foster a community that empowers everyone to be their best'.

Our Values:

- Respect – *We appreciate diversity and the worth in others.*
- Integrity – *We aim to be consistently honest and trustworthy.*
- Excellence (Being your best) – *We accept the challenge of new learning and always try our best.*
- Working together – *We work with others to achieve and promote the involvement and*

contribution of all.

- Responsibility – *We recognise we are accountable for our actions towards ourself, others and the environment.*

A statement about the rights and responsibilities of all students and school staff is included at **Appendix 1**.

3. Guiding principles

- The school will use the *KidsMatter* framework to provide a flexible, whole-school approach to improving children's mental health and wellbeing. This will involve undertaking a three-to-four year cyclical process to plan and take action to promote a positive community; one that is founded on respectful relationships and a sense of belonging and inclusion. It will also promote:
    - social and emotional learning (including evidence-based social and emotional learning programs)
    - working authentically with parents, carers and families
    - support for students who may be experiencing mental health difficulties
    - smart, safe and responsible use of technologies.

  KidsMatter Primary is a mental health and wellbeing framework for primary schools that aims to make a positive difference to the lives of Australian children. *KidsMatter Primary* provides the proven methods, tools and support to help schools work with parents and carers, health services and the wider community, to nurture happy, balanced children.

  An outline of the *KidsMatter* framework is included at **Appendix 2**.

- The school will:
    - employ a program for the beginning of every school year called the *Quality Beginnings program* that assists in setting the scene for students transitioning to their new classroom. This will consist of unpacking the school's values and developing a class mission statement and an agreed code of cooperation to promote a supportive and consistent environment
    - consistently promote the 'be safe, be fair and be friendly' motto
    - implement a curriculum that will include pro-social values and behaviour to enable students to acquire knowledge and skills, value diversity and build a culture of learning, community and engagement
    - promote active student participation and provide students with a sense of ownership of their environment
    - support families to engage in their child's learning and build students' capacity as active learners
    - promote active student participation as an avenue for improving student outcomes and facilitating school change
    - establish social/emotional and educational support for vulnerable students and monitor and evaluate their progress
    - have processes in place to identify and respond to individual students who require additional assistance and support
    - build strong links with the local community to gain access to an extended network of community members, professionals and educators who can provide expertise and experience that can build the capacity of our school and our teachers to respond to the needs of the students.

4. Engagement strategies

To uphold the right of every child to receive an education Westgarth PS employs a variety of engagement strategies that include and are not limited to:

- Expecting regular attendance of all students, except in the case of illness and monitor it according to Department procedures
- Intervening early to identify and respond to student needs for social, emotional and learning support, and where required and resources allow, provide specialist wellbeing and learning supports to meet the needs of students at risk
- Recognising and responding to students' needs through the Program for Students with Disabilities, language support programs and other department initiatives
- Providing staff, pre-service and relief teachers and where appropriate volunteers with appropriate information, training, support and professional development to meet a student's needs
- Providing opportunities for all students, their families and the wider community to participate in school activities and in the development of a positive school culture
- Developing positive relationships which promote engagement, wellbeing and learning
- Providing teaching, learning and extra-curricular activities and services that are inclusive, responsive to student needs and that reflect the diversity of the school community
- Use current and flexible pedagogical styles to cater for different learners to engage all students in meaningful learning experience
- Providing a learning program which is aimed at challenging and extending student learning
- Promoting pro-social behaviours using a range of resources.

5. Identifying students in need of extra support

The Disability Standards for Education 2005 which clarify the obligations of education and training providers and seeks to ensure that students with a disability can access and participate in education on the same basis as other students. The Standards were formulated under the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* and came into effect in August 2005.

Our school will utilise the following information and tools to identify students in need of extra support:

- Engagement with the student's family
- Personal information gathered upon enrolment (including the School Entry Health Questionnaire)
- Attendance rates
- Academic performance, particularly in literacy and numeracy assessments
- Behaviour observed by classroom, yard duty and specialist teachers
- Online incident register.

The Department provides an assessment service to support applications for the *Program for Students with Disabilities* in the categories of Intellectual Disability and Severe Language Disorder with Critical Educational Needs. Assessments on behalf of students under these two categories must be completed through this service.

Referrals will be outsourced during times of extended wait periods. Staff will work closely with families during the referral process, which will be led by the Welfare Coordinator (principal class). The Department referral process for at risk assessment is outlined in **Appendix 3**.

The school adheres to the Abilities Based Learning and Education Support (ABLES) program, which supports the teaching and learning of students with disabilities and additional needs. It provides a suite of curriculum, pedagogy, assessment and reporting resources that assist teachers in recognising and responding to the diverse learning needs of all students and in assessing and reporting student learning, monitoring student progress and providing accurate intervention advice.

ABLES provides an approach to effectively assess, monitor and respond to a student's abilities by:

1. Accurately identifying and setting learning goals for students with disabilities and additional needs.
2. Tracking a student's progress against their education learning plan (ELP) over time, and providing new information to parents on their child's learning and development.
3. Identifying the optimal resources that are known to improve learning, which can be adjusted as the learning needs of students change over time.

To access the ABLES assessment tools, see: ABLES assessment tool

6. Behavioural Expectations

To realise our vision, our school has in place a range of strategies to promote engagement, positive behaviour and respectful relationships for all students in the school. We recognise that some students, as a group or as individuals, may require additional social, emotional or educational support to flourish at school, and so we will put in place strategies to identify these students and provide them with the support they need.

The school works collaboratively with students and parents/carers to establish fair and respectful behaviour policies and practices, based on the school's values, expected social competencies and positive peer relationships. There are also intervention strategies in place to address inappropriate behaviours, including online behaviours, which can negatively impact on the learning environment of the self and others.

The school employs the *Developmental Management Approach* to student behaviour, which provides the pre-conditions for school effectiveness by creating the order necessary to permit learning to occur in classrooms. The *Developmental Management Approach* strives to make students responsible for their own pro-social and learning behaviour as well as that of their peers. It does this by highlighting students' right to learn, teachers' right to teach and students' and teachers' right to feel emotionally and physically safe and the associated responsibilities shared by all in the classroom. The *Developmental Management Approach* will be applied in a way that is proportionate to the behaviour and upholds procedural fairness. **See Appendix 4.**

Developmental Management strategies will include:

- Students being made aware of the expectations for appropriate behaviour and how these are based on the rights of students to do their work without disruption, and for the teacher and students to feel safe physically and emotionally
- Promoting both personal and communal responsibility
- Acknowledging positive behaviours
- Minimising the use of 'rewards' for effort by talking to students about the need for rights and responsibilities

- Remaining calm when dealing with misbehaviour
- Using a series of increasingly severe consequences for misbehaviour when students argue or repeat the misbehaviour
- Isolating or exiting students from the room that continue to act inappropriately

Shared behaviour expectations for students, parents/carers and school staff are reflective of the school's values and are detailed in **Appendix 5.**

Bullying

Bullying is repeated verbal, physical, social or psychological aggressive behaviour by a person or group directed towards a less powerful person or group that is intended to cause harm, distress or fear. There are some specific types of bullying behaviour:

- verbal or written abuse - such as targeted name-calling or jokes, or displaying offensive posters
- violence - including threats of violence
- sexual harassment - unwelcome or unreciprocated conduct of a sexual nature, which could reasonably be expected to cause offence, humiliation or intimidation
- homophobia and other hostile behaviour towards students relating to gender and sexuality
- discrimination including racial discrimination - treating people differently because of their identity
- cyberbullying - either online or via mobile phone.

There are also some behaviours, which, although they might be unpleasant or distressing, are not bullying:

- mutual conflict - which involves a disagreement, but not an imbalance of power. Unresolved mutual conflict can develop into bullying if one of the parties targets the other repeatedly in retaliation
- single-episode acts of nastiness or physical aggression, or aggression directed towards many different people, is not bullying
- social rejection or dislike is not bullying unless it involves deliberate and repeated attempts to cause distress, exclude or create dislike by others.

All teachers at Westgarth Primary School are committed to responding quickly to bullying situations to ensure that they do not continue or escalate. Playground supervision is thorough. All members of staff brief each other regarding potential and actual problems, responding swiftly. A series of graduated warnings/consequences is given to students in bullying situations.

For each incident of alleged bullying the following steps will be taken by the classroom teacher:

1. Interviews student(s) and any other relevant witnesses.
2. Records the incident on the Behaviour Incident Register.
3. Implements remedial action if required and closely monitors student(s) behaviour.

If incidents of bullying continue to occur, in addition to the first two steps, the classroom teacher:

4. Refers the incident to principal class for further discussion and advice.
5. Contacts parents/carers as deemed appropriate.

If an incident is deemed serious enough because of its nature or past history or other relevant factors, teachers and/or principal class staff may progress immediately to stage 5. For repeated incidents/ongoing issues: meeting with Principal, class teacher, student and parents. Action may include:

- Student being placed on a behaviour management plan

- Student being referred to counselling
- Student suspension procedures.

7. School action: Responding to challenging behaviour

Where a student acts in breach of the behaviour standards of our school community, we will institute a staged response, as outlined in the Department of Education and Training's *Student Engagement and Inclusion Guidance*. Section six above outlines the schools restorative practice processes. However, when a student's behaviour is challenging, disciplinary measures may be used as part of a staged response to the challenging behaviour – in combination with other engagement and support strategies – to address the range of factors that may have contributed to the student's behaviour. The school will work closely with a student's family to manage the student's needs in relation to self-regulation and any disciplinary issues.

Disciplinary measures that may be applied include:

- Restorative approach (e.g. repairing damage caused to the relationship)
- Withdrawal of privileges
- Withdrawal from class activities for a specified period. Where appropriate, parents/carers will be informed of such withdrawals
- Suspension (in-school and out of school)
- Expulsion.

Corporal punishment is prohibited in all Victorian schools. Corporal punishment must NOT be used at the school under any circumstances.

Suspension and expulsion are measures of last resort and can only be approved by the principal – and may only be applied when the grounds for suspension and expulsion that are set out in the Department's *Student Engagement and Inclusion Guidance* have been met.

Information on grounds and processes for suspension and expulsion that our school will follow are available here:
http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/participation/Pages/discipline.aspx

8. Engaging with families

Westgarth Primary School is committed to ensuring that all parents, carers and families are valued partners in their child's learning and development. The school acknowledges that families have the first and most significant influence on their child's learning, development, health, safety and wellbeing. The aim is to assist families and the school to form strong collaborative partnerships in children's learning through mutually respectful relationships founded on trust and confidence. Communication, learning at home and school, community identity and decision-making are important components of this partnership.

The school actively engages with families to create successful partnerships between home and school to maximise outcomes for students. This is achieved by:

- Ensuring communication is multi-dimensional, with the purpose of exchanging information, and ensuring the school and families learn from each other. We establish clear communication protocols and provide forums and processes for family, student and school exchange.
- Creating positive attitudes to learning through the involvement of families in children's learning at home and school, through regularly sharing curriculum and learning goals with families, sharing information on child development and encouraging participation in school learning activities and through equipping families to support their children with learning activities and in developing their personal interests.
- Ensuring school practices, policies and programs reflect and value the diversity of families and staff in our school community. This is achieved by being an agent for connecting families within the school community; fostering a culture of inclusion in school programs, policies and activities; coordinating resources and services for families in need and providing access to learning outside of school hours.
- Providing ways for parental involvement in the decision-making processes within the school with regard to school governance, specific student matters and seeking regular feedback to enable continuous improvement.

There are many established opportunities for parental involvement in the school and scope for broadening these further. Some include supporting students in class, including listening to students read and changing home reading material, assisting with the Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden program, assisting in classroom programs such as mathematics and English groups, organisation of whole school celebrations such as the fete, Super Science Club events and parent picnics, active involvement in the Parents and Friends Club, sharing expertise when it relates to the school's units of inquiry and the use of technology and the School Council Sub-Committees; Education, Policy, Environment, Finance and working parties.

9. Evaluation

Data collection and analysis

Data will be collected regarding frequency and types of wellbeing issues, so as to measure the success or otherwise of school-based strategies and approaches.

Some of sources of data used are:

- *KidsMatter* school check-up report
- *KidsMatte*r surveys and mental health maps for students and parents
- Attitudes to School Survey data
- School level report data
- Parent Opinion survey data
- Data from case management work with students
- Student forums
- Student, staff and parent reports of incidents
- Online incident register.

Review of this policy

This policy will be reviewed annually or more often if necessary due to changes in regulations or circumstances.

10. Appendices

Appendix 1: Statement of Rights and Responsibilities

Appendix 2: KidsMatter guiding principles and core components

Appendix 3: Referral Process

Appendix 4: Behaviour Flow chart

Appendix 5: Shared behaviour expectations

11. Related Policies and Programs

This policy works in concert with the following school policies and programs:

- eSmart/Cyber safety policy
- Quality Beginnings Program
- KidsMatter Framework
- Child Safe Policy
- Communications/Community Engagement policy
- Confidentiality policy
- Curriculum policy
- Extension and Enrichment policy
- Parents complaints
- Prevention of bullying staff and community members
- Volunteers policy

This policy is informed by the Department of Education and Training Student Engagement and inclusion Guidance available at http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/participation/Pages/studentengagementguidance.aspx

Appendix 1 - STATEMENT OF RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

It is the right of all members of the school community to experience a safe and supportive teaching, learning and working environment. Staff, students and parents/carers have a right to be treated with respect, and enjoy an environment free from bullying (including cyber bullying), harassment, violence, discrimination or intimidation. (Refer to our eSmart/Cyber safety policy and Equal Opportunity policy).

All members have an obligation to ensure school property is appropriately used and maintained.

Student Rights and Responsibilities

All students have the right to:

- Learn
- Be treated fairly and with respect by all members of the school community
- Receive assistance from others
- Have privacy respected
- Be in a secure and happy environment
- Be an individual
- Feel free to express themselves
- Be able to talk about their problems
- Be listened to
- Expect their property to be safe
- Experience success

All students have the responsibility to:

- Allow others to learn
- Work to the best of their ability
- Respect and value others
- Accept and abide by school rules
- Set a good example
- Cooperate with others
- Respect the privacy of others
- Ensure a safe, clean and happy school environment
- Respect property
- Encourage others to experience success
- Be punctual
- Contribute positively to the educational experience for self and other students
- Participate fully in the school's educational program.

Staff Rights and Responsibilities

All teachers and support staff have the right to:

- Be free from disruption in the teaching and learning process
- Be treated fairly and with respect by all members of the school community
- Be supported and assisted by other staff
- Appropriate support from the school community

All teachers and support staff have the responsibility to:

- Provide effective teaching and learning practices

- Pursue relevant continued learning opportunities relating to their own interests and areas of need and to the needs of the school
- Provide adequate supervision of students
- Support and encourage teaching colleagues and other school staff
- Encourage awareness and understanding of school rules
- Implement the Student Engagement and Inclusion Policy
- Request advice and assistance when needed
- Demonstrate the professional standards set by the Victorian Institute of Teaching:
  - know how students learn and how to teach them effectively,
  - know the content they teach,
  - know their students,
  - plan and assess for effective learning,
  - create and maintain safe and challenging learning environments,
  - use a range of strategies to engage students in effective learning.

Parent/Carer Rights and Responsibilities

All parents/carers have the right to:

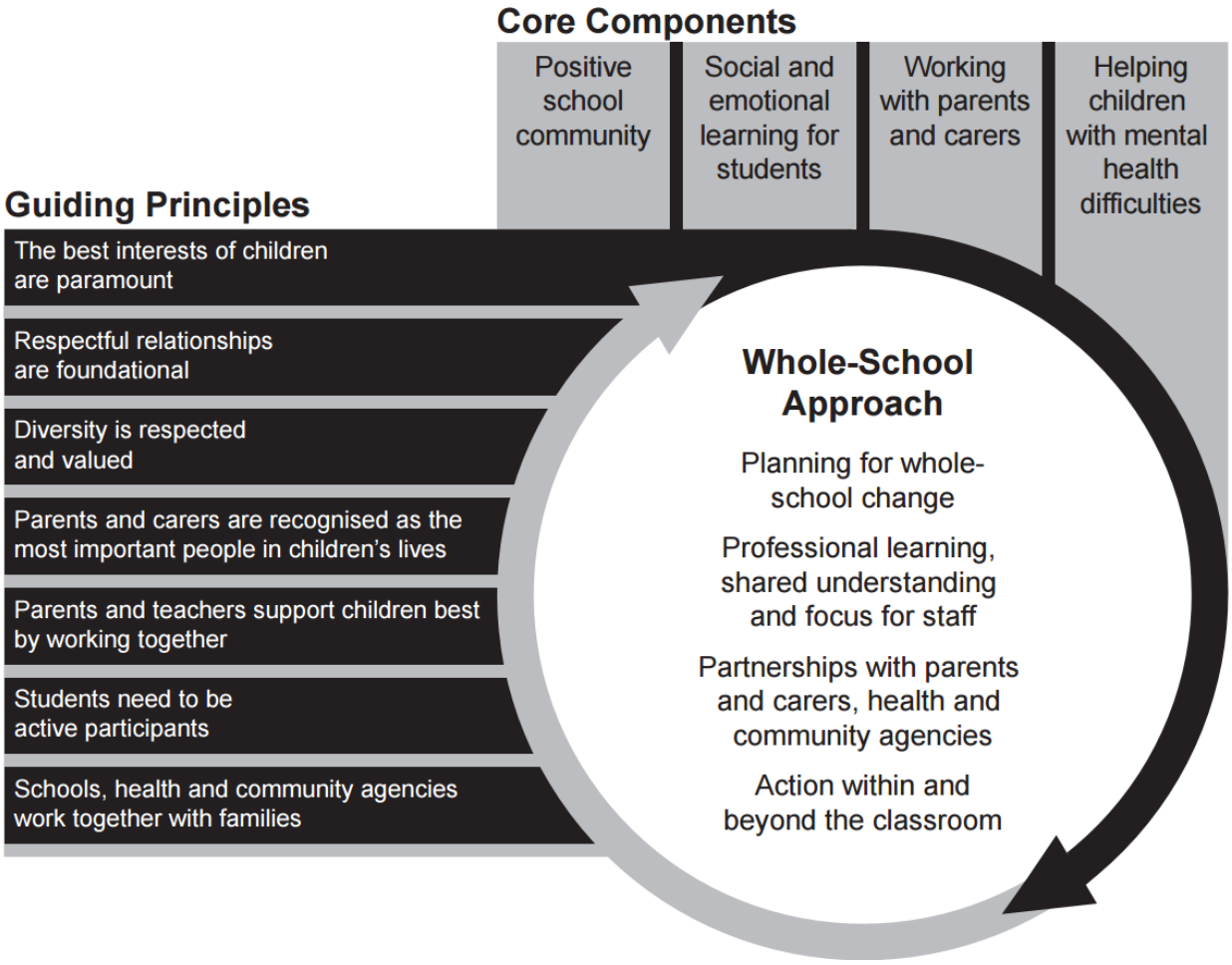
- Have access to staff at convenient, mutually agreed times
- Be informed and be given the opportunity to express themselves on matters of school policy
- Be informed about the progress of their children at school
- Be consulted about serious, inappropriate behaviours involving their children
- Be treated fairly and with respect by all members of the school community

All parents/carers have the responsibility to:

- Take an active interest in their child's educational progress
- Model and reinforce positive behaviours
- Ensure their child's regular attendance
- Support the school in maintaining a safe, respectful and positive learning and working environment for all students
- Support school staff in discipline procedures associated with the implementation of the Student Engagement and Inclusion Policy
- Treat others as they would like to be treated themselves
- Collaboratively share responsibility with the school staff for their child's education
- Engage in regular and constructive communication with school staff regarding their child's learning.

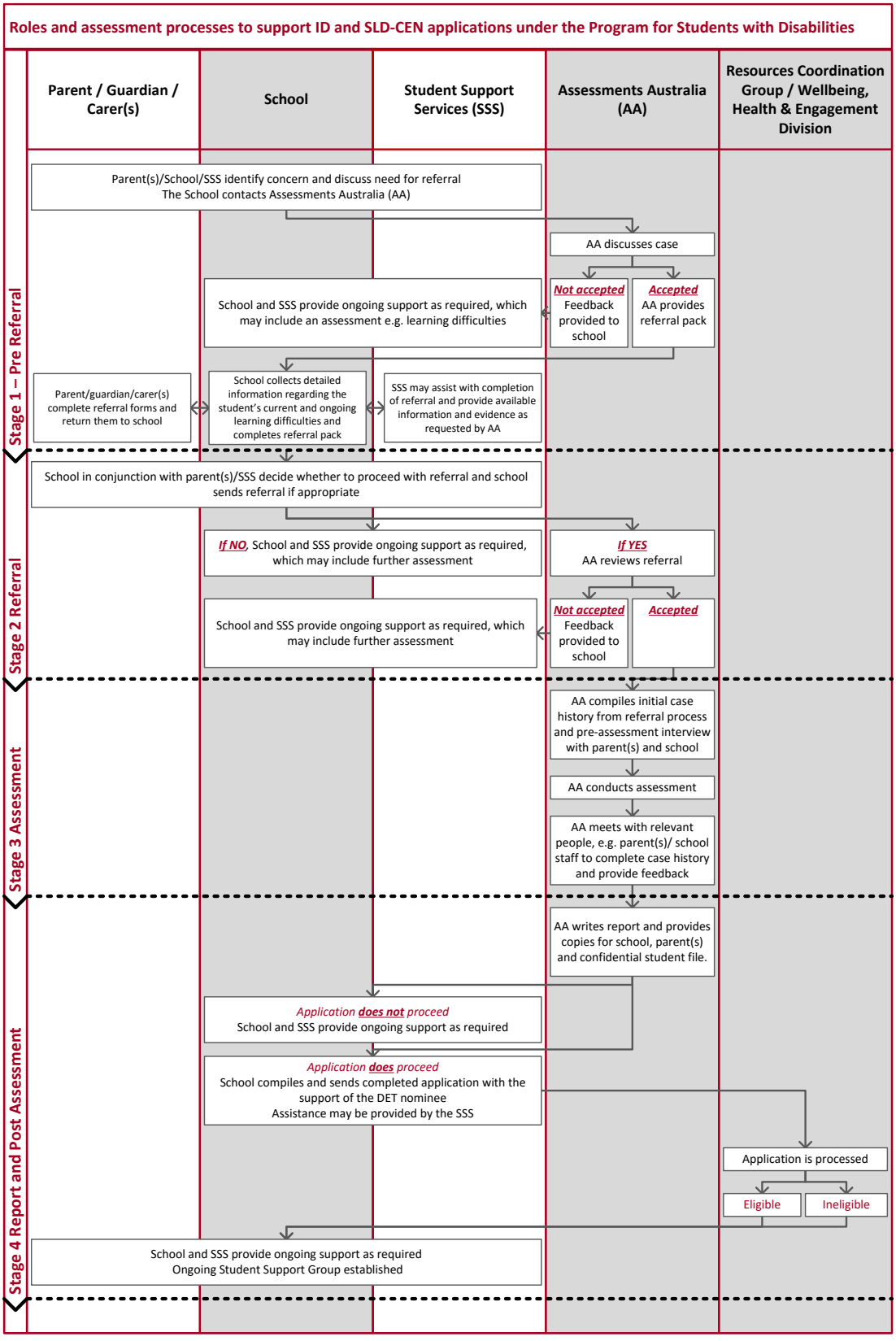
Appendix 2

Depicted in the following diagram: *KidsMatter Primary* provides our school with a comprehensive framework made up of the four core components:



Appendix 3

Referral Process



Source: http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/health/pages/swdasses.aspx

Appendix 4: BEHAVIOUR FLOW CHART

Appendix 5: SHARED BEHAVIOUR EXPECTATIONS

	Students	Parents/Carers	Principals/Teachers &Staff
Engagement (participation in the classroom and other school activities)	Demonstrate: • ***preparedness*** to engage in and take full advantage of the school program • ***effort*** to do their very best • ***self-discipline*** to ensure a cooperative learning environment and model the school values • ***team work***	• Promote positive outcomes by valuing the importance of education and liaising with the school on their child's progress/needs • Support their child in their preparedness for the school day and in the provision of a supportive home environment • Monitor their child's school involvement and progress and communicate with the school when necessary • Are informed and supportive of school programs and actively participate in school events/parent groups	• The school will comply with its duty of care obligations and have a responsibility to provide an educational environment that can effectively engage all students • The school will provide appropriate, relevant and challenging curriculum that gives students the opportunity to have input into their learning and experience success
Attendance	All students are expected to: • attend and be punctual for all timetabled classes every day that the school is open to students • be prepared to participate fully in lessons • bring a note from their parents/carers explaining an absence/lateness	Parents/Carers are expected to: • ensure that their child's enrolment details are correct • ensure their child attends regularly • advise the school as soon as possible when a child is absent • account for all student absences • keep family holidays within scheduled school holidays • Support their child's learning during absences and work with the school to reintegrate students after prolonged absences	In accordance with legislation released 1 March 2014 and Department procedures, the school will: • proactively promote regular attendance • mark rolls accurately each lesson • follow up on any unexplained absences promptly and consistently • identify trends via data analysis • report attendance data in the school's Annual Report • support students whose attendance is problematic by developing 'Return to School' plans and working with families to implement individual strategies

Behaviour	Students are expected to: • model the schools core values of diversity, achievement, responsibility and endeavour • always treat others with respect • never physically or verbally abuse others • take responsibility for their behaviour and its impact on others • follow all reasonable requests of staff • respect the rights of others to learn. No student has the right to impact on the learning of others • respect the property of others • bring correct equipment to all classes • comply with the school's policies and work with teachers and parents in developing strategies to improve outcomes	Parents/Carers are expected to : • have high expectations of their child's behaviour and an understanding of the schools behavioural expectations • communicate with the school regarding their child's circumstances • cooperate with the school by assisting in the development and enforcement of strategies to address individual needs	The school will deliver an inclusive and comprehensive curriculum which promotes positive behaviours and emphasises the wellbeing of every child The school will employ whole school and classroom practices to establish a climate in which appropriate behaviour is the norm for all students and focus on the implementation of preventative and early intervention strategies to deal with attendance and behavioural issues The school will consistently apply its Behavioural Policy through a shared collegiate understanding and only exclude students in extreme circumstances. The school recognises that for some students additional support may be needed in the form of staged responses and is committed to working with families to reintegrate students after exclusion