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.” (Effective Schools are Engaging Schools: Student Engagement Policy Guidelines. Pgs 7)

RATIONALE

At Apollo Parkways Primary School we strive to provide a positive, safe and secure environment to maximise opportunities for all children. We believe in and promote high standards of behaviour and attendance based on cooperation, mutual respect, self worth, self discipline and shared responsibility.

PURPOSE

“Learning takes place within the social context of the school, which has a significant impact on both the quality and the opportunity for learning. Schools provide a strong foundation for student learning when student engagement and wellbeing are a whole school priority.

Many children will encounter some difficulty, including learning difficulty, during school life and will need to be supported by targeted strategies to address such challenges.” (Student Engagement Policy Guidelines. Pgs 7-8)

The school’s Student Engagement Guidelines focus on the following:

- **Creating a positive school culture**
  A particular focus is placed on establishing positive and respectful relationships, particularly between teachers and students, and establishing a learning community that provides multiple and diverse opportunities for students to experience success.

- **Building a safe and supportive school environment**
  Building a safe and supportive school environment is essential to student engagement and wellbeing. Students learn effectively in environments in which they feel safe and supported and where the teachers have high expectations for their learning.

The school has developed a whole school approach to student behaviour and management, based on pro-social values.

- **Expecting positive, supportive and respectful relationships that value diversity**
  Expecting positive and supportive relationships that value diversity between students, their peers, teachers and the whole school community encourages students to take personal responsibility for participation in their education and enables them to provide support and model positive behaviours to other students.
The school will encourage and provide a range of opportunities for parents/carers and members of the broader community to play an active part in the life of the school and the education of their children.

- **Promoting pro-social values and behaviours**
  The school has adopted a set of core values that are encapsulated by five key words – Caring, Courtesy, Cooperation, Contribution, Consideration. These values help students to engage with school, their peers, their teachers and their learning.

These values form part of the school’s Physical, Personal and Social Learning curriculum and are a particular focus of the ‘Linking to Thinking’ unit which is implemented in all grade levels at the start of each school year. This unit encourages students to understand themselves as learners whilst encouraging students to work together and to take greater responsibility for their own learning and participation at school. The core values are clearly articulated and displayed in all learning areas.

- **Encouraging student participation**
  Encouraging active and meaningful student participation and providing all students with opportunities to contribute and provide feedback to the school and the classroom ensure that student’s feel valued and empowered.

The school supports students to become active participants in their education, including involvement in decisions about what and how they learn, and how their learning is assessed.

- **Proactively engaging with parents/carers**
  The school will support families to engage in their child’s learning and build their capacity as active learners through the development of an environment that welcomes all parents/carers and is responsive to them as partners in learning.

The school will foster this relationship with families through the following activities:
- Ensuring all families are aware of the Student Engagement Policy and Appendix document.
- Providing effective school to home and home to school communications.
- Providing volunteer opportunities to enable parents/carers to contribute.
- Involving families with homework and other curriculum related activities.
- Involving families as participants in school decision making.
- Coordinating resources and services from the community for families, students and the school.
- Providing opportunities to enhance parenting knowledge and skills.

- **Implementing preventative and early intervention approaches**
  Through a comprehensive understanding of the whole school community and of the wellbeing and/or learning issues that students may be experiencing provides the foundation for the development of preventative and early intervention processes and programs to support students.

Prevention strategies are designed to reduce any risk factors that may contribute to attendance or behavioural issues, while increasing protective factors in order to support student engagement and positive behaviour.

Intervention strategies support early identification of vulnerable students and those at risk of disengaging from school. The school will work to provide social and/or educational support for these students and then monitor and evaluate progress.

- **Responding to individual students**
  The school has processes in place to respond to individual students who require additional assistance and support, including the utilisation of school based and external student wellbeing support services. The focus of this work is to identify and address barriers to learning and school engagement that individual students may be facing.
SCHOOL PROFILE

Apollo Parkways Primary School is located on the outer northern suburb of Greensborough and has an enrolment of 765 students. The majority of students are from within the immediate locality, but a significant proportion of students, 42%, are drawn from suburbs outside the local neighbourhood. Our school’s high profile with regard to information and communication technologies (ICT) and general education excellence has led to many families choosing to travel to Apollo Parkways Primary School from suburbs some distance away.

The proportion of families entitled to receive Education Maintenance Allowance is 11%, whilst the number of English as a Second Language students is 20 and for 2010 we will have 5 students on the Program for Students with Disabilities.

The school has excellent facilities and resources which provide opportunities for all students to experience a comprehensive curriculum in a caring, yet challenging atmosphere. Whilst the emphasis is placed on literacy and numeracy, the curriculum at Apollo Parkways also features specialist programs in Performing Arts (music), Visual Arts, Library, Physical Education & Sport and LOTE (Italian). Additional assistance programs such as Reading Recovery, Corrective Reading and Language Support Programs are provided to those students with special needs. An enrichment program, The Pegasus Program, is offered to highly capable and talented students.

Apollo Parkways has a fine history of excellence in many aspects of education and in particular the innovative application of ICT to the primary school curriculum. The expansive world of ICT has brought profound changes to the nature of teaching and learning, assessment and school culture itself. Our students have the capacity to bring to their learning information and experiences far beyond their immediate world. Through the development of our ‘Apollo Parkways Learning Model’ our students, teachers and school community have been able to articulate clearly our educational philosophy. The ‘Apollo Parkways Learning model’ embodies our core values and school vision – lifelong learning in a global community.

Our corridors are adorned with pennants that recognise premierships won in the Diamond Valley Primary School Sports Association competitions. Team photographs celebrate achievements of students at State championship level, in a wide range of sports, over many years.

Our biennial whole school musical production is a highlight of The Arts program, with all children singing, dancing and performing in front of audiences of proud families and friends. Recent school productions have further showcased student talents as scriptwriters and choreographers, further broadening the opportunities afforded children at our school. Our junior and senior choirs together with the school band are regular performers at both school functions and community events.

In 2010 the school plans to further enhance its curriculum through the introduction of the Restorative Practices framework for supporting students in their emotional wellbeing and development. We believe that this will sit well beside our current student wellbeing and engagement processes and further enhance our current practices.

Our parent community is heavily involved in the school’s life and shares a commitment to its future development. It is clear that there is a climate of mutual goodwill, trust and cooperation. School Council and the school leadership work to ensure a democratic atmosphere is created, based on clear and unified purpose. The community feels confident that it is involved in the school’s growth and that its opinion will be sought and valued.

The staff’s desire for our school to be characterised by enthusiasm, hard work, success and pride has resulted in Apollo parkways primary School being considered a good place to work. The school has attracted, developed and retained an excellent staff.
WHOLE SCHOOL PREVENTION

At Apollo Parkways the school operates with a broad range of policies, associated documents and programs that support student engagement, including the following:

- **Student Engagement policy**
  This policy has been adapted from our previous Student Behaviour & Management policy and outlines our framework for working as a school community to developing a positive, safe and secure school environment that promotes high standards of behaviour based on cooperation, mutual respect, self worth, self discipline and shared responsibility.

A brochure for families – Maintaining a Safe & Secure School Environment – is provided to all families upon enrolment. It provides parents with general information in regard to bullying and ideas for assisting their children. It also contains more specific information regarding the schools processes for dealing with bullying.

- **Learning policy**
  Apollo Parkways Primary School operates with a clearly articulated educational philosophy. Our Learning policy together with the Apollo Parkways Learning Model is underpinned by the following shared beliefs and understandings:
  - Students come from different backgrounds, learn at different rates, and have different interests, values and learning styles.
  - The development of an individual’s self esteem and confidence is central to student learning.
  - Learning is best fostered in a supportive and challenging environment which promotes enjoyment and success for every student.
  - Regular feedback and an opportunity to reflect about learning improve performance.
  - Transferring skills and making connections to real life and contemporary situations greatly enhances learning.
  - Challenging students to develop deep levels of thinking, and supporting students to question and reflect are vital aspects of student learning.

As a result learning should then:
  - build on existing learning
  - promote individual success in learning
  - develop self esteem, confidence, self motivation, independence and interdependence
  - challenge students to think, collaborate, question, create and problem solve
  - foster a desire and enthusiasm for life long learning
  - assist students to improve their own learning.

- **Restorative Practices**
  In 2010 Apollo Parkways will introduce Restorative Practices as a framework to support the work teachers do to promote the wellbeing of all students, with a particular emphasis on developing responsible citizenship.

- **Linking to thinking - integrated curriculum units**
  At the commencement of each school year all grades undertake a two week unit – Linking to Thinking – that provides the framework for developing children’s understandings of themselves as learners and their place within a community of learners. Through this unit each grade is able to establish the rules for appropriate behaviour and develop as citizens of the wider school community. This is also the time in which whole school protocols for appropriate behaviour are confirmed with all children.

- **Internet usage policy and student contracts**
  These documents detail the appropriate use of ICT and the internet for all students across the school. The protocols for ICT usage are on display in all classrooms and are introduced each year through our ‘Linking to Thinking’ units. All parents and children in Grades 3-6 are required to undertake a new agreement each year to adhere to our ICT protocols.

All staff has undertaken the Australian Communications & Media Authority (ACMA) accredited cyberbullying training program. (January 2010).
Information on internet safety is provided to all families at the start of each year to support their understanding and work in this area.

- **School Leaders/Junior School Council/ Junior Environmental Council**
  Each year children from Grades 3-6 have the opportunity to gain selection into positions of student leadership.

**School Leaders** – Twenty six students from Grade 6 are selected by a ballot of peers and staff for positions as part of our student leadership group, with two selected as School Captains. These students undertake a number of roles throughout the year to support school activities, in particular they host a number of whole school assemblies.

**Junior School Council** – all Grade 3-6 classes select a member for the JSC. This group meet on a regular basis and plan a variety of activities for all children. Many of these activities are fundraising for charities that directly support children.

**Junior Environmental Council** – all Grade 3-6 classes select a member for the JEC. This group take a particular focus on supporting the improvement and development of the physical/natural environment of our school and beyond. A particular focus for this group is the annual Arbor Week activities.

The following polices also support Student Engagement:

- First aid
- Students with Special Medical Needs
- Headlice
- Anaphylaxis Management
- School Uniform
- Gifted and Talented Students

**RIGHTS & RESPONSIBILITIES**

We believe that Student Behaviour & Management is the shared responsibility between students, the school, home and the community and provides for the rights of all through the following principles:

- Students have a right to work in a secure environment where they are able to fully develop their talents and interests.
- Parents have a right to expect that their children will be educated in a secure environment and equally have an obligation to support the school in its efforts.
- Teachers have a right to expect that they will be able to teach in an orderly and co-operative environment.
- The school leadership and staff have an obligation to implement the Student Engagement policy in a fair and consistent manner.

**NOTE:**
The operations of the school and the conduct of all members of the school community are governed by the following legislation:

- Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006
- Disability Discrimination Act 1992
- Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (in conjunction with DEECD Disability Standards for Education 2005)
- Education and Training Reform Act 2006
- Education Act 1958

**SCHOOL ACTIONS - attendance**

“Regular school attendance enables students to maximise their full educational potential and to actively participate and engage in their learning. It is important that children develop habits of regular attendance at an early age. Students who are regularly absent from school are at risk of missing out on fundamental aspects of their educational and social development.” (Student Engagement Policy Guidelines. Pg 17)
“While student attendance at school is a legal obligation of parents/carers, consistent with the ‘Education and Training Reform Act 2006’, Victorian government schools, in partnership with parents/carers, students and the wider community, must provide active support for full student attendance and retention until the completion of Year 12 or its equivalent.” (Student Engagement Policy Guidelines. Pg 17)

The following are the ways in which Apollo Parkways Primary School promotes and supports school attendance:

**Whole school strategies:**
- Articulating high expectations in regard to attendance to all members of the school community, which promotes awareness that absence results in quantifiable lost learning time and opportunities.
- Adopting consistent, rigorous procedures to monitor and record student absence.
- Following up student absences promptly and consistently.
- Implementing data driven attendance improvement strategies.
- Creating safe, supportive learning environments where all students experience success through active participation and engagement in purposeful learning.

When a more targeted response is required, effective intervention strategies for students with inconsistent attendance or chronic absence patterns include:
- Immediate follow up of individual student absence.
- Organising attendance focused meetings with parents/carers and students (where appropriate).
- Forming Student Support Groups to enable a coordinated response to support for individual students and parents/carers.
- Positive and flexible support and follow up with students on their return to school, including the modification of learning outcomes where required.
- Referring of individual students and parents/carers to community agencies for additional support.

**Shared expectations for attendance:**

**Parents/carers are required to:**
- Ensure that their child attends school at all times.
- Promote and provide organisational support for their child for full attendance and participation at school on all designated school days.
- Ensure that their child is on time for school each day.
- Inform the school in writing – using the Student Absence proforma – regarding their child’s absence.
- Notify the school in advance if an absence of any period is planned.
- Support their child’s learning during continued or prolonged absences.

The school will:
- Promote student attendance through clear statements of expectations.
- Record student attendance twice per day.
- Maintain accurate attendance records on CASES21 using appropriate absence codes.
- Process student transfers promptly, ensuring that the transferring school is contacted immediately upon enrolment.
- Work collaboratively with parents/carers to develop learning plans when a student will be absent from school for an extended period of time. This process will involve discussion about the possible impact of the proposed absence on the student’s learning.

**Recording attendance:**

The attendance roll is a permanent record of the attendance of all students. Recording student attendance is required by legislation.

At Apollo Parkways Primary School the process for the recording of attendance is:
- All student absences are recorded twice a day (morning and afternoon) by teachers onto a classroom attendance roll. Attendance is aggregated weekly onto the CASES21 database. CASES21 provides codes for recording particular types of absences.
- Parents/carers are required to complete a Student Absence proforma for each absence. These proformas provide parents with possible alternatives to account for absences which relate to CASES21 coding.
- These Student Absence proformas and any other records of communication are retained by the school for 2 years.
Students arriving late or being dismissed early must be signed in or out by their parents from the school office. Parents are required to provide a reason for this part day absence. These part day absences are recorded onto the CASES21 database.

Student attendance figures will appear on students’ mid-year and end of year reports.

DEECD and enrolment auditors will be given complete access to all student attendance records if requested.

Monitoring attendance:

- Parents/carers are required to notify the school when their child is absent. This should occur on the day of the absence.
- A written explanation using a Student Absence proforma must be forwarded to the school when the student returns to school.
- The written excuse offered by parents/carers is not necessarily a satisfactorily explained absence if the school does not accept the validity of the excuse.

NOTE:
“From Term 3, 2010, all government schools will be using an online learning and teaching management system called the Ultranet. The Ultranet will provide students with access to ICT environments that increases their participation, engagement and achievement in education. It will help to improve student learning and enable the department to better manage government school performance. The Ultranet will capture data from CASES21 attendance and existing student management systems. Parents will have access to student attendance data through the Ultranet.” (Student Engagement Policy Guidelines. Pg 20)

Attendance follow up:

- The student welfare coordinator will monitor student attendance through evaluation of the student absence reports on CASES21.
- For cases of ongoing, unexplained absence a Student Support Group meeting will be organised, with key personnel in attendance (parents, classroom teacher, principal/assistant principal, and support staff as appropriate; chaplain, educational psychologist, social worker)
- Programs and strategies to support the student’s attendance at school will be discussed and developed at this meeting. Proformas for developing these plans are available in the Student Engagement Policy Guidelines.
- When the school feels that it has exhausted all strategies for addressing a student’s unsatisfactory attendance, the regional office should be contacted to provide additional support and advice.

Student attendance exemptions:
“The Education and Training Reform Act 2006 states that schooling is compulsory for children aged six to 16 years. Unless there is a reasonable excuse, this means that parents/carers of children of compulsory school age must ensure that they are:
- enrolled at and attend a registered school; or
- registered with the Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority (VRQA) for home schooling.”
(Student Engagement Policy Guidelines. Pg 21)

SCHOOL ACTIONS – promoting positive behaviour

“The DEECD is committed to providing safe, secure and stimulating learning environments in all Victorian government schools. Students can reach their full educational potential only when they are happy, healthy and safe and when there is a positive school culture to support them. This interdependent relationship between student wellbeing and student learning is fundamental to students’ positive and successful engagement with their education.” (Student Engagement Policy Guidelines. Pg 23)

Prevention:
At Apollo Parkways Primary School the development of a school culture that promotes student wellbeing is fundamental to our operation. The school has a set of clearly articulated values; ‘The 5Cs - Caring, Courtesy,
Cooperation, Contribution, Consideration’ which underpin all relationships within the school community. The school values are displayed in all learning and office areas of the school.

These core values are reinforced through the development of the following:
- School rules – a common and agreed set of rules, which govern the behaviour of students at school and during school organised events and activities. The school rules are clearly articulated and displayed in all learning areas.
- Classroom rules – these are negotiated with the class at the beginning of each year. These support and reinforce the school rules and are written in child friendly language.
- Code of Conduct booklets – a set of school developed support material, one for each grade level. These booklets provide for teaching and learning activities that support our school’s approach to student behaviour and management. The statements in the Code of Conduct booklets are printed in Parent Information Handbooks at the beginning of each year.

Intervention:
“It is recognised that some individuals and groups of students require additional support in the development of pro-social, positive behaviours.” “When concerns arise about a student’s behaviour, or when a student is displaying chronic patterns of behaviour, a more targeted response is required.” (Student Engagement Policy Guidelines. Pg 23 & 24)

At Apollo Parkways Primary School these students are supported through involvement in targeted intervention approaches that may include a range of specialist personnel who will assist them to improve their wellbeing and educational performance. This may include:
- The School Chaplain undertakes both individual and small group counselling programs to support students referred by teachers or parents.
- The DEECD education psychologist is available to support students who require individual counselling and support.
- The Social Integration Unit (SIU) provides a program for students identified with specific behavioural requirements. The programs implemented at the SIU work to build pro-social replacement behaviours in a highly accountable environment. Enrolment at the SIU operates on a part time basis in conjunction with the referring school where newly developed behaviours are allowed to be practiced. Involvement with the SIU requires a strong partnership with parents/carers. Student Support Group processes are used to support the development and monitoring of students behaviour.

NOTE:
Restorative Practices
In 2010 Apollo Parkways Primary School will investigate the implementation of restorative practices as a whole school approach to support student behaviour and management.

“Restorative practices are best incorporated within a whole-school approach and can be represented by a range of informal and formal strategies such as the use of effective language, class circles and community conferencing. Restorative practices involve the use of transferable values and principles to promote social equity in relationship, empathy and personal accountability. An effective restorative approach couples control with support, and confronts and shows disapproval of the wrongdoing.

The hierarchy of restorative practices includes:
- Universal – reaffirming relationships through developing social and emotional skills
- Targeted – repairing relationships in the classroom, small groups, individual conferences
- Intensive – rebuilding relationships through community conferencing.”
(Student Engagement Policy Guidelines. Pg 25)

Student Support Groups:
A Student Support Group may be established for a child who is demonstrating behaviours which are cause for concern, for either the school or parents. The Student Support Group involves the classroom teacher, parents/carers and principal (or nominee). The parent may range for an advocate to attend to support the parents or child. The
advocate should attend only as an observer, and should refrain from directing the process or answering on behalf of the student or their parents.

The Student Support Group aims to:
- Develop an understanding of the child or young person.
- Utilise data collection and monitoring systems that will inform decision making.
- Identify the child’s learning, social, emotional, behavioural and environmental needs, and the support and resources the student requires for improvement.
- Involve key specialist personnel, who may include: student welfare coordinator, educational psychologist, school chaplain.
- Support referrals to community support agencies for specialist interventions.

**SUSPENSION - general information**

Suspension is a serious disciplinary measure and should normally only be used when other measures have not produced a satisfactory response. Suspension should be used for the shortest time necessary. The maximum period of time a student can be suspended consecutively is five school days. ‘School days’, as referred to in this document, does not include weekends, public holidays or school holidays. A student cannot be suspended for more than fifteen school days in a school year, unless approval is sought from the regional director. However, a student may be suspended for a further period (not exceeding five school days) pending the principal’s decision whether to expel a student.

The Student Engagement Policy Guidelines provides detailed information in regard to suspension:
- Suspension – guiding principles
- Procedures prior to suspension
- Grounds for suspension
- Procedures for suspension
- Procedures for immediate suspension
- Period of suspension
- Post suspension student support group meetings

**EXPULSION**

The school principal has the authority to permanently exclude a student from his/her school according to the procedures set out in the Student Engagement Policy Guidelines. This power cannot be delegated to any other person at the school level.

Permanent expulsion from a school is the most extreme sanction open to a principal. Except in the most unusual and extreme circumstances, it will only be used after all other relevant forms of behaviour management outlined in the Student Engagement Policy Guidelines have been exhausted.

The Student Engagement Policy Guidelines provides detailed information in regard to expulsion:
- Authority for expulsion
- Grounds for expulsion
- Procedures prior to expulsion
- Procedures for expulsion
- Procedures following expulsion
- Transition arrangements
- Appeal process
- Expulsion review panel
- Role of the expulsion review panel
- Procedures for the expulsion review panel
- Further appeal processes.