



PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that all students and members of our school community understand:

- (a) our commitment to providing a safe and supportive learning environment for students
- (b) expectations for positive student behaviour
- (c) support available to students and families
- (d) our school's policies and procedures for responding to inappropriate student behaviour.

Niddrie Autistic School is committed to providing a safe, secure and stimulating learning environment for all students. We understand that students reach their full potential only when they are happy, healthy and safe, and that a positive school culture helps to engage students and support them in their learning. Our school acknowledges that student wellbeing and student learning outcomes are closely linked.

The objective of this policy is to support our school to create and maintain a safe, supportive and inclusive school environment consistent with our school's values.

SCOPE

This policy applies to all school activities, including camps and excursions.

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POLICY

1. School profile

Niddrie Autistic School is a P-3 school for autistic students formed at the Niddrie Campus of Western Autistic School. At the start of 2021 the two campuses will become two separate schools when the two schools formally de-amalgamate.

In 2020 the enrolment is currently 96 students

- 82% of the current enrolments are boys and 18% of students come from a Language than other than English background.
- There is 1 Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander student enrolled.
- Equivalent Full Time EFT staff of 44.89 comprised of one Principal Class personnel, 23.0 EFT Teachers, 18.29 Education Support staff, 1.0 Speech Pathologist, 1.0 Occupational Therapist and 0.4 School Psychologist.
- SFO Index, 0.5053
- SFOE Index, 0.3865.



Mission: to prepare students for mainstream classroom settings or local special schools.

The NIDDRIE AUTISTIC SCHOOL outreach program follows up on our exit students. In

2020, 21 students must exit the school at the end of Grade 3.

School values, philosophy and vision

Niddrie Autistic School's Statement of Values and School Philosophy is integral to the work that we do and is the foundation of our school community. Students, staff and members of our school community are encouraged to live and demonstrate our core values of respect, integrity and kindness at every opportunity.

Our school's vision is a dedicated school for students with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). Our vision for learning is that each student is equipped with the educational and social skills they need to be able to live successfully in their community, and in the short term to move into an integrated neighbourhood school setting.

Our Statement of Values is available online at: [Statement of Values and School Philosophy Policy.docx](#)

2. Engagement strategies

Western Autistic School has developed a range of strategies to promote engagement, positive behaviour and respectful relationships for all students in our school. We acknowledge that autistic students need extra social, emotional or educational support at school, and that the needs of students will change over time as they grow and learn.

A summary of the universal (whole of school), targeted (year group specific) and individual engagement strategies used by our school is included below:

Universal

- high and consistent expectations of all staff, students and parents and carers
- prioritise positive relationships between staff and students, recognising the fundamental role this plays in building and sustaining student wellbeing
- creating a culture that is inclusive, engaging and supportive
- welcoming all parents/carers and being responsive to them as partners in learning
- analysing and being responsive to a range of school data such as attendance, Attitudes to School Survey, parent survey data, student management data and school level assessment data
- deliver teaching and learning tailored to their interests, strengths and aspirations
- teachers at Niddrie Autistic School use the NIDDRIE AUTISTIC SCHOOL Teaching and Learning framework to ensure an explicit, common and shared model of instruction to ensure that evidenced-based, high yield teaching practices are incorporated into all lessons
- teachers at Niddrie Autistic School adopt a broad range of teaching and autism specific assessment approaches to effectively respond to the diverse learning styles, strengths and needs of our students and follow the standards set by the Victorian Institute of Teaching
- our school's Statement of Values are incorporated into our curriculum and promoted to students, staff and parents so that they are shared and celebrated as the foundation of our school community
- carefully planned transition programs to support students moving into different stages of their schooling



- positive behaviour and student achievement is acknowledged in the classroom, and formally in school assemblies and communication to parents
- monitor student attendance and implement attendance improvement strategies at a whole-school, cohort and individual level
- students have the opportunity to contribute to and provide feedback on decisions about school operations through Junior School Council and Student Support Group meetings where possible. Students are also encouraged to speak with their teachers, Leading Teacher, Assistant Principal and Principal whenever they have any questions or concerns.
- create opportunities for cross—age connections amongst students through school Family Days, Harmony Day and End of Year Concerts
- we are proud to have an ‘open door’ policy where students and staff are partners in learning
- we engage in school wide positive behaviour support with our staff and students, which includes programs such as:
 - Respectful Relationships
 - Bully Stoppers
 - Safe Schools
- programs, incursions and excursions developed to address issue specific behaviour (i.e.SSS supports)

Targeted

- each class has a Leading Teacher who monitors the health and wellbeing of students in their pod, and acts as a point of contact for students who may need additional support
- all students in Out of Home Care will be appointed a Learning Mentor, have an Individual Learning Plan and will be referred to Student Support Services for an Educational Needs Assessment
- wellbeing and health staff will undertake health promotion and social skills development in response to needs identified by student wellbeing data, classroom teachers or other school staff each year
- staff will apply a trauma-informed approach to working with students who have experienced trauma

Individual

- Student Support Groups, see: <https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/student-support-groups/policy>
- Individual Learning Plan and Behaviour Support Plan
- Program for Students with Disabilities
- referral to Student Welfare Coordinator and Student Support Services
- referral to Child First, Headspace
- Navigator
- Lookout

Niddrie Autistic School implements a range of strategies that support and promote individual engagement. These can include:

- building constructive relationships with students at risk or students who are vulnerable due to complex individual circumstances
- meeting with student and their parent/carer to talk about how best to help the student engage with school
- developing an Individual Learning Plan and/or a Behaviour Support Plan
- considering if any environmental changes need to be made, for example changing the classroom set up
- referring the student to:
 - school-based wellbeing supports



- Student Support Services
- Appropriate external supports such as council based youth and family services, other allied health professionals, headspace, child and adolescent mental health services or Child First

Where necessary the school will support the student's family to engage by:

- being responsive and sensitive to changes in the student's circumstances and health and wellbeing
- collaborating, where appropriate and with the support of the student and their family, with any external allied health professionals, services or agencies that are supporting the student
- monitoring individual student attendance and developing an Attendance Improvement Plans in collaboration with the student and their family
- running regular Student Support Group meetings for all students:
 - with a disability
 - in Out of Home Care
 - And with other complex needs that require ongoing support and monitoring.

Niddrie Autistic School will use the following strategies to ensure the student wellbeing needs of all students transferring into Niddrie Autistic School are supported:

- Students from a government school will have their data automatically transferred via CASES21. See: [Policy Advisory Library – Student transfer information.](#)
- Students transferring from non-government schools will have to complete an enrolment form.
- Niddrie Autistic School will request reports and a transition statement from the previous school/s including information on any foreseeable risks.
- Students transferring from existing schools will attend a transition session specific to their year level

If required, interviews with prospective students and families will be held to understand student needs and to support transition. This may also include working with the student's previous school and establishing a Student Support Group.

3. Identifying students in need of support

Niddrie Autistic School is committed to providing the necessary support to ensure our students are supported intellectually, emotionally and socially. Whole school leadership play a significant role in developing and implementing strategies help identify students in need of support and enhance student wellbeing. Niddrie Autistic School will utilise the following information and tools to identify students in need of extra emotional, social or educational support:

- personal, health and learning information gathered upon enrolment and while the student is enrolled
- attendance records
- academic performance
- observations by school staff such as changes in engagement, behaviour, self-care, social connectedness and motivation
- attendance, detention and suspension data
- engagement with families

4. Student rights and responsibilities



All members of our school community have a right to experience a safe and supportive school environment. We expect that all students, staff, parents and carers treat each other with respect and dignity where possible. Our school's Statement of Values highlights the rights and responsibilities of members of our community.

Students have the right to:

- participate fully in their education
- feel safe, secure and happy at school
- learn in an environment free from bullying, harassment, violence, discrimination or intimidation
- express their ideas, feelings and concerns.

Students have the responsibility to learn to:

- participate fully in their educational program
- display positive behaviours that demonstrate respect for themselves, their peers, their teachers and members of the school community
- respect the right of others to learn.

Students who may have a complaint or concern about something that has happened at school are encouraged to speak to their parents or carers and approach a trusted teacher or a member of the school leadership team.

Suspension, expulsion and restrictive interventions are measures of last resort and may only be used in particular situations consistent with Department policy, available at:

- <https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/suspensions/policy>
- <https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/expulsions/policy>
- <https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/restraint-seclusion/policy>

In line with Ministerial Order 1125, no student aged 8 or younger will be expelled without the approval of the Secretary of the Department of Education and Training.

Further information is also available at:

- [Procedure for Suspension](#)
- [Information for Parent and Carers about Expulsions](#)

As per Department policy, all suspensions and expulsions are recorded on CASES21

Corporal punishment is prohibited in our school and will not be used in any circumstance.

The Principal of Niddrie Autistic School is responsible for ensuring all suspensions and expulsions are recorded on CASES21.

5. Student behavioural expectations

Behavioural expectations of students, staff and families are grounded in our school's Statement of Values. Student bullying behaviour will be responded to consistently with Example School's Bullying policy.

When a student exhibits a behaviour/s of concern, Niddrie Autistic School will institute a staged response, consistent with the Department's Student Engagement and Inclusion Guidelines. Where appropriate, parents will be informed about the behaviour of concern and a well-being support action plan taken by teachers and other school staff in consultation with parents/carers.

A tailored re-engagement plan will be designed for the student in consultation with the family and SSS staff as



required. A wellbeing action plan may be used as part of a staged response to the behaviour of concern in combination with other support strategies to ensure that factors that may have contributed to the student's behaviour are identified and addressed. Response measures to behaviours of concern at our school will be applied fairly and consistently. Students and families will always be provided with an opportunity to be heard.

Response measures that may be applied include:

- Working with the student, teacher and families to understand the behaviour of concern and its function
- teacher controlled strategies such as teaching the student to request a break, or other reasonable and proportionate responses to the behaviour
- referral to the Regional Student Support Services via IRIS Alerts
- restorative practices
- behaviour/ wellbeing support plans and reviews

6. Engaging with families

Niddrie Autistic School values the input of parents and carers, and we will strive to support families to engage in their child's learning and build their capacity as the students first educators. We aim to be partners in learning with parents and carers in our school community.

We work hard to create successful partnerships with parents and carers by:

- ensuring that all parents have access to our school policies and procedures, available on our school website
- maintaining an open, respectful line of communication between parents and staff, supported by our Communicating with School Staff policy.
- providing parent opportunities for families to take part and contribute to school activities
- involving families with homework and other curriculum-related activities
- involving families in school decision making
- coordinating resources and services from the community for families
- including families in Student Support Groups and developing individual plans for students.

7. Evaluation

Niddrie Autistic School will collect data each year to understand the frequency and types of wellbeing issues that are experienced by our students so that we can measure the success or otherwise of our school based strategies and identify emerging trends or needs.

Sources of data that will be assessed on an annual basis include:

- student survey data
- incidents data
- school reports
- parent survey
- case management
- CASES21
- SOCS



COMMUNICATION

This policy will be communicated to the school community in the following ways:

- Available publicly on the school website.
- Included in transition and enrolment packs.
- Included in the induction process for all new staff

FURTHER INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

- Statement of Values and School Philosophy Policy,
- Bullying Prevention Policy,
- Child Safe Standards Policy (commitment and code of conduct).

REVIEW CYCLE AND EVALUATION

Evaluation	Recommended review cycle	1-2 years
Date Ratified	November 2020	
Next review date	November 2021	