



Help for non-English speakers

If you need help to understand the information in this policy please contact Niddrie Autistic School on 03 9112 8112

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, where student participation is encouraged and valued, 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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1. School profile
2. School values, philosophy and vision
3. Wellbeing and engagement strategies
4. Identifying students in need of support
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POLICY

1. School profile

Niddrie Autistic School is a government school in South West Victoria Region.

Niddrie Autistic School has at its foundation a reputation for providing an exemplary education for students with autism from Prep to Year 3. There is a commitment to excellence, which is communicated, to staff,



students and families. Members of staff have high expectations and a belief that every child can learn and achieve. The school has profound expertise in developing and implementing Individual Educational Plans (IEPs) and in assessing and monitoring the learning of students to ensure the goals in IEPs are achieved.

Niddrie Autistic School is situated 16 kms north of the Central Business District (CBD) in the suburb of Niddrie. The school enrolls students diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder. The philosophy of the school is to provide an intensive program for students with autism to build their social communication and sense of self and others which will guide their inclusion and participation through their early years of schooling and beyond.

To support the needs of autistic children and their families, the school provides initial support for each student as he/she moves to their designated neighbourhood mainstream or special school setting.

In 2022 the enrolment was 97 students. 80% of these enrolments were boys and 21% of students come from a Language other than English background. The majority of students travel from a wide geographical area and travel to Niddrie by a contract bus service.

The school has an Equivalent Full Time (EFT) staff of 41.30 comprised of 1 Principal Class personnel, 2 leading teachers, 4 learning specialists, 14.6 EFT Teachers, 18.68 Education Support staff, 0.6 EFT Occupational Therapist.

In 2021 a DET funded capital works project was completed, the school now has a new state-of-the-art building comprising 12 new classrooms and collaborative learning areas. These works were part of the Stage 1 development of a bigger Master Plan for the redevelopment of the whole site.

As Niddrie Autistic School provides an educational program for autistic students from Prep to year 3, ensuring these students make a successful transition to further educational contexts from Year 4 is a vital focus not only of their program while at Niddrie Autistic School but also in the following years.

2. 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 to move into their neighbourhood school setting.

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

3. Wellbeing and engagement strategies

Niddrie Autistic School has developed a range of strategies to promote engagement, an inclusive and safe environment, positive behaviour, and respectful relationships for all students in our school. We recognise the importance of student friendships and peer support in helping children and students feel safe and less isolated. We acknowledge that some students may 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 and that embraces and celebrates diversity and empowers all students to participate and feel valued
- 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, parent survey data, student management data and school level assessment data
- deliver a broad curriculum that is tailored to students' interests, strengths and aspirations
- teachers at Niddrie Autistic School use an 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 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 and School Philosophy 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 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 the Junior School Council and Student Support Group meetings where possible. Students are also encouraged to speak with their teachers and Principal whenever they have any questions or concerns.
- create opportunities for cross—age connections amongst students through Family Days, Harmony Day and End of Year Concerts.
- all students are welcome to self-refer to the Principal if they would like to discuss a particular issue or feel as though they may need support of any kind. We are proud to have an 'open door' policy where students and staff are partners in learning
- programs, incursions and excursions developed to address issue specific needs or behaviour
- opportunities for student inclusion
- measures are in place to empower our school community to identify, report and address inappropriate and harmful behaviours such as racism, homophobia and other forms of discrimination or harassment.

Targeted



- each class has a leading teacher/learning specialist, a senior teacher responsible for their section, who monitor the health and wellbeing of students in their year, and act as a point of contact for students who may need additional support
- Koorie students are supported to engage fully in their education, in a positive learning environment that understands and appreciates the strength of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture
- our English as a second language students are supported and all cultural and linguistically diverse students are supported to feel safe and included in our school
- we support learning and wellbeing outcomes of students from refugee background through developing individual learning plans and ensuring translation services are provided as required
- we provide a positive and respectful learning environment for our students who identify as LGBTIQ+ and follow the Department's policy on [LGBTIQ Student Support \[insert any specific measures at your school to support LGBTIQ+ students\]](#)
- all students in Out of Home Care are supported in accordance with the Department's policy on [Supporting Students in Out-of-Home Care](#) including being appointed a Learning Mentor, having an Individual Learning Plan and a Student Support Group (SSG) and being referred to Student Support Services for an Educational Needs Assessment
- students with a disability are supported to be able to engage fully in their learning and school activities in accordance with the Department's policy on [Students with Disability](#), such as through reasonable adjustments to support access to learning programs, consultation with families, student support groups and individual education plans
- 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
- students enrolled under the Department's international student program are supported in accordance with our legal obligations and Department policy and guidelines at: [International Student Program](#)

Individual

- [Behaviour - Students](#)
- [Behaviour Support Plans](#)
- [Student Support Services](#)

as well as to other Department programs and services such as:

- [Program for Students with Disabilities](#)
- [Mental health toolkit](#)
- [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
- each student will have access to 4 student support group meetings per year ([Student Support Groups](#))
- 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 ([Individual Education Plans](#))
- 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 ChildFirst
 - Re-engagement programs such as Navigator

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
- engaging with our regional Koorie Education Support Officers
- running regular Student Support Group meetings for all students:
 - with a disability
 - in Out of Home Care
 - with other complex needs that require ongoing support and monitoring.

4. 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. The Student Wellbeing team plays 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
- engagement with families
- self-referrals or referrals from peers

5. 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. 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, racism, discrimination or intimidation
- express their ideas, feelings and concerns.

Students have the responsibility 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. Further information about raising a complaint or concern is available in our Complaints Policy.

6. Student behavioural expectations and management

Behavioural expectations of students are grounded in our school's Statement of Values/Student code of conduct.

Violence, bullying, and other offensive and harmful behaviours such as racism, harassment and discrimination will not be tolerated and will be managed in accordance with policy. Bullying will be managed in accordance with our Bullying Prevention Policy.

When a student acts in breach of the behaviour standards of our school community, Niddrie Autistic School will institute a staged response, consistent with the Department's policies on behaviour, discipline and student wellbeing and engagement. Where appropriate, parents will be informed about the inappropriate behaviour and the disciplinary action taken by teachers and other school staff.



Our school considers, explores and implement positive and non-punitive interventions to support student behaviour before considering measures that reduce class participation.

At Niddrie Autistic School we utilise functional behaviour assessment to understand the student. Individual behaviour plans are developed in consultation with families and allied health. Skills to be taught are identified along with accompanying strategies and a data collection method to enable systematic reflection of the students skill development and success of the chosen strategies.

The learning environment is audited for potential contributions to the child's behaviour and where possible, the environment will be modified to maximise engagement in learning.

The last resort is to reduce their engagement in classroom learning. This will be informed by child safety of all students concerned.

Respect for the child is at the forefront of all behaviour support plans.

Whole school engagement strategies include:

- Structured classroom environments
- Specialised staff with knowledge of ASD
- Team teaching model
- Curriculum based on student strengths and interests
- Individual learning plans
- Holistic curriculum delivery

Suspension, expulsion and restrictive interventions are measures of last resort and may only be used in 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.

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

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

7. 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 active learners. 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 volunteer opportunities so that families can contribute to school activities
- involving families with 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.

8. 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, including attendance and absence data
- SOCS

Niddrie Autistic School will also regularly monitor available data dashboards to ensure any wellbeing or engagement issues are acted upon in a timely manner and any intervention occurs as soon as possible.

COMMUNICATION

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

- Available publicly on our school's website
- Included in staff induction processes
- Included in transition and enrolment packs
- Included in student diaries so that it is easily accessible to parents, carers and students
- Included as annual reference in school newsletter
- Made available in hard copy from school administration upon request

Our school will also ensure it follows the mandatory parent/carers notification requirements with respect to suspensions and expulsions outlined in the Department's policies at:

- [Suspension process](#)
- [Expulsions - Decision](#)

FURTHER INFORMATION AND RESOURCES



The following Department of Education and Training policies are relevant to this Student Engagement and Wellbeing Policy:

- [Attendance](#)
- [Student Engagement](#)
- [Child Safe Standards](#)
- [Supporting Students in Out-of-Home Care](#)
- [Students with Disability](#)
- [LGBTIQ Student Support](#)
- [Behaviour - Students](#)
- [Suspensions](#)
- [Expulsions](#)
- [Restraint and Seclusion](#)

The following school policies are also relevant to this Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy:

- Child Safety Policy
- Bullying Prevention Policy
- Inclusion and Diversity Policy
- Statement of Values and School Philosophy

POLICY REVIEW AND APPROVAL

Policy last reviewed	June 2022
Consultation	School Council
Approved by	Principal
Next scheduled review date	June 2024