



STUDENT WELLBEING & ENGAGEMENT POLICY

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

Northern School for Autism 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.

CONTENTS

1. School profile
2. School values, philosophy and vision
3. Engagement strategies
4. Identifying students in need of support
5. Student rights and responsibilities
6. Student behavioural expectations
7. Engaging with families
8. Evaluation

Reservoir Campus
16-18 Gertz Ave
Reservoir Vic 3073
Phone: 03 9462 5990

Lalor Campus
2 - 4 Lyndon Street
Lalor Vic 3075
Phone: 03 9464 3480

northern.sch.autism@education.vic.gov.au
<http://www.northernautism.vic.edu.au>

POLICY

1. School profile

Northern School for Autism operates on two campuses in Reservoir and Lalor.

The Reservoir Campus is a purpose-built school providing state facilities designed in line with international, autism specific, educational best practice in specialist school design. The campus caters for 200 Early and Middle Year's students, across 25 classrooms.

The school is serviced by school buses provided by the Department. Students must attend three days per week minimum and reside within the school's Designated Transport Area to access the bus service.

The Lalor Campus opened in 2012 to cater for the growing number of secondary aged students attending the school. The campus is a self-contained wing, co-located on the Peter Lalor Vocational College site and caters for 100 students, across 14 classrooms.

Shuttle buses running to and from the Reservoir Campus also service the Lalor Campus. The site is near public buses and trains which students access for travel education programs. Students also access the nearby shopping complex and a municipal leisure centre for consumer skills and swimming programs.

The school is divided into sub-schools according to the stages of schooling (age approximate)

- Early Years – 5 - 8 years (Reservoir)
- Middle Years – 9 - 12 years (Reservoir)
- Later Years – 13 - 18 years (Lalor)

Class Group Organisation

Class-groups generally comprise eight to ten students of similar chronological age. Students are grouped according to developmental and educational need. Teachers and teacher aides work in partnership, to support students. Teachers are responsible for the development, delivery and evaluation of all classroom activities. Teachers and teacher aides work in teams of two or three in each classroom, and are supported by speech and occupational therapists, specialist teachers and a team of leading teachers.

Allied Health

To support the implementation of the educational programs the school provides a range of specialist services including speech pathology, occupational therapy and access to student wellbeing staff. Through a team based collaborative approach, therapy provision is provided within classroom settings. Teachers and therapists work as a trans-disciplinary team to ensure that students have access to consistent and effective therapeutic programs.

Early Years' and Middle Year's Programs

The Early and Middle Years' curriculum is designed to enable students to develop their communication and interpersonal skills, as well as to assist students learn to understand and self-regulate their emotions and behaviour. The core learning goals are articulated in the 'NSA Supplementary Curriculum'. This curriculum is based upon very early developmental milestones which children with ASD find challenging to reach and generalise.

Reservoir Campus
16-18 Gertz Ave
Reservoir Vic 3073
Phone: 03 9462 5990

Lalor Campus
2 - 4 Lyndon Street
Lalor Vic 3075
Phone: 03 9464 3480

northern.sch.autism@education.vic.gov.au
<http://www.northernautism.vic.edu.au>

Reservoir Campus - Facilities

- Play Therapy Room
- Music Room
- Three gyms (occupational therapy)
- Visual Art Room
- Student Kitchen
- Multi-purpose Room
- Student Library
- Classrooms with outdoor courtyards
- Secure, modern, age appropriate play-grounds with discrete, secure play areas, including bike riding tracks
- Secure perimeter

Later Years' Program

Students in the Later Years of schooling access an educational program which is designed to support their transition from school to an adult educational setting such as TAFE, supported employment or a day service. Students complete a school-based transition program with an applied learning focus. The students participate in curriculum across the following domains:

- Literacy and Numeracy
- Work Skills – including Horticulture, Office Skills and Food Technology
- Physical Education – including gym, outdoor education and bike education
- Leisure and Recreation
- Health – including human relations, puberty, drug education, personal care, protective behaviours
- The Arts
- Travel Education
- Enterprise and Consumer Skills programs
- Career Action Plan Program (CAPs)

Accredited TAFE programs and work experience are offered to students on an as needs basis. Students who have the ability to participate in an accredited program are offered the opportunity to enrol in the Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning (VCAL). Other students complete an ASDAN certificate. In their final year of school, all students are supported to transition to life beyond school.

Lalor Campus – Facilities

- Secure, age appropriate, outdoor recreation area including shaded seating, ropes climbing course, fitness equipment, a large oval and a bike track
- Multi-purpose Room
- Student recreational room/ Library
- Student Kitchens and Canteen
- Student Garden
- Technology rich classrooms

2. School values, philosophy and vision

Our 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 trust, understanding and safety.

Reservoir Campus
16-18 Gertz Ave
Reservoir Vic 3073
Phone: 03 9462 5990

Lalor Campus
2 - 4 Lyndon Street
Lalor Vic 3075
Phone: 03 9464 3480

northern.sch.autism@education.vic.gov.au
<http://www.northernautism.vic.edu.au>

Our school's vision is to be a centre of excellence, and our motto is "Learning for Life".

Our *Statement of Values and School Philosophy* is available on our school website [at: \[please insert link when the document has been placed on the website\]](#).

3. Engagement strategies

NSA has developed a range of strategies to promote engagement, positive behaviour and respectful relationships for all students in our school. 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
- prioritising 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, parent survey data, student management data and school level assessment data
- deliver a broad curriculum including VET programs and VCAL to ensure that students are able to choose subjects and programs that are tailored to their interests, strengths and aspirations
- teachers at NSA use the TEACCH instructional framework to ensure an explicit, common and shared model of instruction ensuring evidenced-based, high yield teaching practices are incorporated into all lessons
- teachers at NSA 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 are incorporated into our curriculum and promoted to students, staff and parent/carers 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 are 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
- creating opportunities for cross-age connections amongst students through school concerts, athletics, music programs and peer support programs
- encouraging students to self-refer to the classroom teacher or another trusted adult within the school, such as the Assistant Principal and 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
- engaging 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. anger management programs)
- opportunities for student inclusion (i.e. sports teams, lunchtime activities).

Reservoir Campus
16-18 Gertz Ave
Reservoir Vic 3073
Phone: 03 9462 5990

Lalor Campus
2 - 4 Lyndon Street
Lalor Vic 3075
Phone: 03 9464 3480

northern.sch.autism@education.vic.gov.au
<http://www.northernautism.vic.edu.au>

Targeted

- each year group has a Team Leader, a senior teacher responsible for their year, who monitors the health and wellbeing of students in their year, and act as a point of contact for students who may need additional support
- all students from Year 10 and above will be assisted to develop a Career Action Plan, with targeted goals and support to plan for their future
- connect all Koorie students with a Koorie Engagement Support Officer
- 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
- NSA assists students to plan their Year 10 work experience, supported by their Career Action Plan
- 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

NSA 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 [ChildFirst](#)
 - re-engagement programs such as [Navigator](#)
 - [Programs for Students with Disabilities](#)
 - [LOOKOUT \(Education Support Centres\)](#)

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 develop strategies to improve attendance 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.

4. Identifying students in need of support

NSA is committed to providing the necessary support to ensure our students are supported intellectually, emotionally and socially. The Leadership team plays a significant role in developing and implementing strategies to help identify students in need of support and enhance student wellbeing. NSA will utilise the following information and tools to identify students in need of extra emotional, social or educational support:

Reservoir Campus
16-18 Gertz Ave
Reservoir Vic 3073
Phone: 03 9462 5990

Lalor Campus
2 - 4 Lyndon Street
Lalor Vic 3075
Phone: 03 9464 3480

northern.sch.autism@education.vic.gov.au
<http://www.northernautism.vic.edu.au>

- 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 data
- suspension data (if applicable)
- engagement with families
- self-referrals or referrals from peers
- liaison with Case Workers, Child Protection and NDIA workers

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, 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.

6. Student behavioural expectations and management

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 NSA's Bullying Prevention Policy.

When a student acts in breach of the behaviour standards of our school community, NSA will institute a staged response, consistent with the Department's Student Engagement and Inclusion Guidelines and Behaviour Policy. Where appropriate, parents/carers will be informed about the inappropriate behaviour and the disciplinary action taken by teachers and other school staff.

Our school considers, explores and implements positive and non-punitive interventions to support student behaviour before considering disciplinary measures. At NSA the teaching team will work with allied health professional and the Leadership Team to find the function of the behaviour. The teaching team will then be responsible for teaching the appropriate skill/s.

Disciplinary measures may be used as part of a staged response to inappropriate behaviour in combination with other engagement and support strategies to ensure that factors that may have contributed to the student's behaviour are identified and addressed. Disciplinary measures at our school will be applied fairly and consistently. Students will always be provided with an opportunity to be heard.

Reservoir Campus
16-18 Gertz Ave
Reservoir Vic 3073
Phone: 03 9462 5990

Lalor Campus
2 - 4 Lyndon Street
Lalor Vic 3075
Phone: 03 9464 3480

northern.sch.autism@education.vic.gov.au
<http://www.northernautism.vic.edu.au>

NSA's staged response is part of our *School Wide Positive Behaviour Support Policy*:

Tier 1 strategies

Student profiles are completed for all students to provide teachers with information in regard to students' preferences and interests. Individual Learning Plan (ILP) folders will be available to teachers to read to familiarise themselves with the students in their class-group. In their daily work teachers and their teams are required to:

- Devise and implement ILP's.
- Teach to the hidden curriculum (Core and Maintenance Goals).
- Provide a structured environment.
- Use visual supports.
- Use positive reinforcers including motivators.
- Understand what triggers and calms behaviours of concern.
- Implement communication systems and sensory diets.
- Update student profiles and BSPs.
- Use behaviour logs to track the frequency, duration and intensity of behaviours of concern.

Tier 2 Strategies

Tier 2 strategies are implemented with the advice and support of a member of the leadership team.

- Re-patterning
- Overcorrection
- Withholding
- Time Away
- Consequences
- Physical Support

Tier 3 strategies

Tier 3 strategies may only be implemented upon the advice and support of a member of the leadership team.

- Behaviour Support Plan (BSP).
- Case management.
- Withdrawal from some programs.
- Part time attendance.
- Alternative program.

Reservoir Campus
16-18 Gertz Ave
Reservoir Vic 3073
Phone: 03 9462 5990

Lalor Campus
2 - 4 Lyndon Street
Lalor Vic 3075
Phone: 03 9464 3480

northern.sch.autism@education.vic.gov.au
<http://www.northernautism.vic.edu.au>

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 NSA is responsible for ensuring all suspensions and expulsions are recorded on CASES21.

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

7. Engaging with families

NSA 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/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
- providing parent volunteer opportunities so that families can 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.

8. Evaluation

NSA 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:

- Incidents Data
- School Reports
- Parent Survey
- Case Management
- CASES21, including attendance and absence data
- SOCS

NSA will also regularly monitor and ensure any wellbeing or engagement issues are acted upon in a timely manner and any intervention occurs as soon as possible. If a student is considered "at risk" due to high absences, the classroom teacher will email Principal and Assistant Principal weekly regarding how many days the student attended this week.

All information is recorded in student welfare file. The Principal and Assistant Principal will communicate with DFFH or other agencies involved

Reservoir Campus
16-18 Gertz Ave
Reservoir Vic 3073
Phone: 03 9462 5990

Lalor Campus
2 - 4 Lyndon Street
Lalor Vic 3075
Phone: 03 9464 3480

northern.sch.autism@education.vic.gov.au
<http://www.northernautism.vic.edu.au>

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 Packs

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

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

FURTHER INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

References:

- <https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/student-support-groups/policy>
- <https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/individual-education-plans-ieps/policy>
- <https://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/teachers/learningneeds/Pages/psd.aspx>
- <https://services.dffh.vic.gov.au/child-first-and-family-services>
- <https://headspace.org.au/>
- <https://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/teachers/behaviour/engagement/Pages/navigator.aspx>
- <https://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/programs/Pages/lookout.aspx?Redirect=2>

This Policy should be read in conjunction with the school's:

- *Attendance Policy*
- *Bullying Prevention & Response Policy*
- *Duty of Care Policy*
- *Inclusion & Diversity Policy*
- *Digital Learning in Schools Policy*
- *Koorie Education Policy*
- *Mobile Phones – Student Use Policy*
- *Statement of Values & School Philosophy*

Also refer to NSA's Child Safe Policies:

- Child Safe Standard 2: *Child Safe Policy (Including Child Safe Standard 1: Strategies to Embed an Organisational Culture of Child Safety and Child Safe Standard 4: Screening Supervision and Training Practices to Reduce the risk of Child Abuse by New & Existing Personnel)*
- Child Safe Standard 3: *Child Safe Code of Conduct*
- Child Safe Standard 5: *Process for Responding & Reporting Suspected Child Abuse Policy*
- Child Safe Standard 6: *Strategies to Identify and Reduce or Remove Risks of Child Abuse*
- Child Safe Standard 7: *Strategies to Promote the Participation & Empowerment of Children Policy (part of the Annual Report)*

Reservoir Campus
16-18 Gertz Ave
Reservoir Vic 3073
Phone: 03 9462 5990

Lalor Campus
2 - 4 Lyndon Street
Lalor Vic 3075
Phone: 03 9464 3480

northern.sch.autism@education.vic.gov.au
<http://www.northernautism.vic.edu.au>

REVIEW CYCLE

This policy will be reviewed every two years or if guidelines change.

This policy was updated August 2021 and is scheduled for review August 2023.

EVALUATION

Policy mandatory for VRQA purposes. School Council consultation is Required.

School Council was consulted and recommendations, if any, were made by 9th September 2021.

This August 2021 update was presented to School Council for Approval on 9th September 2021

Reservoir Campus
16-18 Gertz Ave
Reservoir Vic 3073
Phone: 03 9462 5990

Lalor Campus
2 - 4 Lyndon Street
Lalor Vic 3075
Phone: 03 9464 3480

northern.sch.autism@education.vic.gov.au
<http://www.northernautism.vic.edu.au>