**WERRINGTON COUNTY**

**PUBLIC SCHOOL**



# STUDENT WELFARE

# POLICY

# 2012

# POLICY and PROGRAM

*Student Welfare in schools:*

* *encompasses everything the school community does to meet the personal, social and learning needs of students;*
* *is achieved through the total school curriculum and the way it is delivered;*
* *incorporates effective discipline;*
* *incorporates preventative health and social skills programs;*
* *stresses the value of collaborative early intervention when problems are identified;*
* *provides ongoing educational services to support students;*
* *recognises the diversity within the school community and provides programs and support which acknowledge difference and promote harmony;*
* *recognises the role the schools play as a resource to link families with community support services;*
* *provides opportunities for students to:*
* *~ enjoy success and recognition*

 *~ make a useful contribution to the life of the school*

 *~ derive enjoyment from their learning.*

(Student Welfare Directorate NSW Department of School Education, 1996)

In taking account of such demands, the staff at Werrington County has formulated a Student Welfare Policy which recognises the intrinsic right of every child to a ‘rewarding and confident school life.’

To achieve these ends, the welfare program consists of a wide range of activities utilising developmental, preventative and support strategies having the capacity to encompass a diverse school population. It is unrealistic to expect that a simple statement of intent, in respect of student welfare, will provide an adequate supportive model for the complex social life of a school such as Werrington County. Instead, this school has devised a charter that has the capacity to tap the ‘corporate spirit’ of a community comprising both youth and adults.

When a community such as ours shares a sense of purpose, commitment and fellowship the student welfare program does not stand as a distinct policy design but is fundamental to the ethos of the school. It is possible, however, to identify a set of established parameters that operate to guide the staff and students in satisfactorily fulfilling the variety of roles in which they operate as members of the school community.

At Werrington County, our goal is to provide effective learning and teaching within a secure, well managed environment, in partnership with parents and the wider community. The desired outcomes of our student welfare program therefore relate to:

* community participation;
* effective learning and teaching;
* positive climate and good discipline.

**PRINCIPLES OF STUDENT WELFARE**

A school’s student welfare program is designed for all. In order to design a just and equitable program, we must allow for a finely tuned balance between the individuals’ rights and responsibilities for all students in the school community.

**RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE WERRINGTON COUNTY COMMUNITY**

Fundamental to a successful student welfare program is the strength of staff commitment to the welfare charter of the school. Administrative structures, principles and procedures will serve only as a token infrastructure if the personnel of the school do not totally support the objectives of student welfare. For this reason, the staff, students and parents of the school have formulated the Werrington County Student Welfare Program with the personnel roles outlined below designed by the staff who will fulfil these roles.

**Principal**

The principal ensures that:

* a commitment to student welfare underpins all the policies and activities of the school;
* the school community reviews policies and practices related to student welfare;
* student welfare is regularly reviewed using appropriate planning processes;
* the school’s discipline policy is regularly reviewed.

**Teaching and Support Staff**

The focus of any school’s student welfare program is the interpersonal environment created within the confines of each class. Although the classroom environment will quite clearly reflect a vast array of variables such as the personality, interests and skills of the individual teacher and the attributes of the student group such as age, ability, family backgrounds and interests, there must be a central commitment to the school’s welfare charter. Teaching and support staff, according to their roles in the school, should:

* demonstrate sensitivity to the particular needs of identifiable sub-groups within the class;
* provide a clear and purposeful teaching program based on challenging syllabus content and innovative and varied classroom practices;
* establish a climate of mutual respect which is based on a warm and courteous relationship with the students;
* establish clear routines so that the students respond positively to knowing ‘what is expected of them’. This not only promotes a pattern of security but also provides a set of ‘benchmarks’ for the maintenance of standards, particularly in the complex area of behaviour;
* contribute to the provision of a caring, well managed, safe environment for all students, staff and parents;
* participate in the teaching and learning process in ways which take account of the objectives in this policy;
* establish sound classroom management practices. Rarely in our society do we expect such a large group of people to co-exist for such lengthy periods of time. It is not surprising that frustrations and tensions arise. The teacher must orchestrate the ebbs and flows implicit in classroom behaviours. Establishing effective classroom practices allows the teacher to give a little rather than locking him/herself and the students into extreme situations;
* promote self-esteem. The enhancement of students’ self image and the creation of a rewarding and fulfilling classroom environment for all students is one of the school’s principal objectives.

**Staff with a Specific Support Role**

Staff in this role should ensure the school develops effective mechanisms for integrating behaviour management, conflict resolution and support for students experiencing difficulties.

**Students**

Students will be encouraged to:

* act according to the Positive Behaviour for Learning (PBL) expectations established by the school community;
* contribute to the provision of a caring, safe environment for fellow students, staff and parents;
* participate actively in the learning and teaching process;
* provide their views on school community decisions, including reviews of student welfare, using agreed processes which includes the Student Representative Council ;
* practise peaceful resolution of conflict.

**Parents**

Parents will be encouraged to:

* participate in the learning of their children and the life of the school, including reviews of student welfare practices and the PBL Expectations;
* share responsibility for shaping their children’s understanding about acceptable/behaviour;
* work with teachers to establish fair and reasonable expectations of the school.

**Scripture Teachers**

At the commencement of each school year, it is the responsibility of the Scripture coordinator to in-service all Scripture teachers, participating in the Religious Instruction Program, on the school’s behaviour management program. This workshop is conducted to ensure teachers are familiar with the behaviour management practices adopted by the school and procedures for dealing with inappropriate behaviour is consistent between classes and across the school.

**Student Welfare Committee / Learning Support Team (LST)**

The student welfare committee is chaired by an Assistant Principal and is comprised of representatives from the executive, support staff and teachers as well as the school counsellor.

This committee has the responsibility of:

* formulating policy and procedures in student welfare;
* assessing and responding to the ongoing needs of students. In the case of recurrent difficulties, the corporate strength of such a committee is essential in designing appropriate strategies to assist such students;
* liaising with the Departmental personnel, Home/School Liaison Officer (HSLO) and other authorities with a responsibility in the area of student welfare.

**School Counsellor**

The school counsellor works with students who may have educational, behavioural or other problems. The problems dealt with may be unusual or they may be the normal challenges confronting a young person growing up in a complex domestic, educational and social setting.

Counsellors also work with the Department of Education and Community (DEC) specialist staff and other members of the support professions.

Teachers wanting to refer students to the counsellor must use LST referral forms. Completed LST forms should be forwarded through team leaders to the school counsellor. Once assessed by the school counsellor, each case is presented to the Learning Support Team by the counsellor for further assessment and prioritising. It is then the responsibility of the school counsellor and Learning Support Team to monitor and reassess the status of each case.

**ARCO / Grievance Officer**

A member of staff is elected to represent the school community in situations where staff or students have a grievance regarding discrimination. The Officer is responsible for informing all staff and students of their rights in relation to discrimination and the correct procedure they should follow when reporting grievances. Through this practice and educational programs, the school aims to combat discrimination, harassment and vilification.

**The Learning and Support Teacher (LAST)**

In accordance with the DEC policy statement, the role of the LAST is to assist the school cater for those students in regular classes who are experiencing difficulties in basic areas of learning regardless of the cause. Such difficulties may include students with intellectual disabilities.

The LAST has the responsibility of:

* assisting in the identification and assessment of students with learning difficulties;
* working with the Student Welfare Committee, school executive, teachers and parents to plan and design appropriate programs for identified students;
* working with regular class teachers on the implementation of specific programs;
* assisting in the monitoring and evaluation of programs designed for individuals or small groups.

# COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

**Objective**

To enhance community participation by:

* building learning communities in which staff, student and parents work together for planned results;
* encouraging parents and community members to participate actively in the education of young people and in the life of the school;
* acknowledging parents as partners in school education;
* encouraging students to have a sense of belonging to the school community;
* assisting families to gain access to support services in the community;
* fostering close links with the wider community;
* encouraging links between parent and student representative groups;
* inviting parents to share their skills and experiences in the school community;
* supporting students and their parents in making decisions about learning programs;
* recognising students’ families, cultures, languages and life experiences.

**Outcomes**

* there will be strong links between students, staff, parents and other members of the school community.
* parents and community members will participate in the education of young people and share the responsibility for shaping appropriate student behaviour.
* the curriculum, goals, plans and actions of the school will reflect the needs and aspirations of the students and the wider school community.
* students, parents and teachers will perceive that the learning and teaching programs in the school are relevant and beneficial.
* staff will facilitate parent and community involvement in a range of school activities.

**Results of Students**

* students will be supported by parent and community participation in school activities.
* students will value the school as an integral part of the community.
* students and their families will know how to gain access to relevant support service in the community.
* students will be partners with parents and teachers in the teaching and learning processes at the school.

Parents and teachers of Werrington County Public School, share a commitment to provide opportunities for students to take responsibility for their actions and to have a greater say in the nature and content of their learning.

The school is not solely responsible for, or equipped to develop, socially acceptable behaviour by students. That is a shared responsibility of parents and students in partnership with teachers.

Parents as well as staff members, are mentors and role models for desirable social behaviour and in communicating and demonstrating the benefits of cooperative behaviour.

**Parents**

Working through our participating parent body, the P and C, parents will be encouraged to contribute to the development and regular review of the school’s policies. Subsequently, parents will be expected to support the school in the application of the policy’s ‘Rights and Responsibilities’ statement.

There must be a partnership between parents, teachers and students to teach and promote socially responsible behaviour. Parents will also be invited to comment on the school’s practices and policies as part of the school’s annual self-evaluation which is published in the Annual School Report.

**Uniform Policy**

The following procedure will be adopted with students who regularly come to school not wearing uniform:

Step 1 • A letter home to the parents of the child stating that uniform must be worn.

Step 2 • The parents will be contacted and asked to take their child home and dress him/her in uniform before returning him/her to school.

No student will be permitted to participate in any school excursion or sporting fixture if he/she is not wearing school uniform.

Again, this decision has been endorsed by the school’s parent body. It is anticipated that all parents will ensure that their children wear school uniform as it is an important factor in building school pride and developing in students a responsibility for their own behaviour.

***The school’s Sun Safe Policy requires students to wear hats whenever outside - ‘No hat-no play’. Students without hats must play in the shade.***

**The Life of the School Community**

Although often assumed that student welfare needs are responded to, and satisfied within the formal classroom offerings, it is essential that the total life of the school reflects the commitment to student welfare.

Werrington County is an open school - it operates free of barriers both within the school and between the school and its community. There are many occasions when the self-esteem and identity of students in our school is enhanced by sharing experiences with families and friends.

These include:

* school assemblies
* Student of the Week, Bronze, Silver ,Gold and Principal’s Awards, Merit Certificates and ‘Superkids’ Awards
* Open Day
* sports carnivals
* class/grade newsletters.

**Students with Disabilities**

In line with the DEC policy, Werrington County Public School supports the integration of students with disabilities. Where a student with a disability is placed in a classroom, teachers will work collaboratively with itinerant support teachers in designing individual classroom programs.

**Students with Identified Health Issues**

In line with the DEC policy, Werrington County Public School ensures all students with identified health issues including anaphylaxis, asthma, epilepsy, diabetes etc. have Individual Health Care Plans to address their specific needs. These Health Care Plans are displayed in appropriate places around the school including office area, sick bay, class rolls, casual folders and playground ‘bumbags’. Information regarding these children, procedures and policies are regularly disseminated to all school staff. The school follows the Mandatory Training procedures outlined by the DEC and any further training as the need arises.

**STUDENT WELFARE - RELATED ISSUES**

**Staff Development**

As student welfare is the primary concern of the school, it is appropriate that it takes a high profile in staff development programs.

**(i) Staff Collegial Teams**

Collegial team structures exist to develop a ‘system thinking’ approach to improving teacher and student learning in our school. This procedure ensures training and teaching programs better reflect the needs of individuals and teams and effectively support school and DEC priorities. Collegial teams are directed and focused and so have a greater and more positive impact on school improvement.

**(ii) Staff Forums**

These take two forms:

* discussion of welfare issues at staff and specific team meetings;
* specific seminars in which staff respond to various position statements and propositions;

**(iii) Documents**

Although this document provides an overview of the Werrington County student welfare program, there are many other support documents available to staff. These are contained in the teacher reference section of the library.

**(vi) School Development Days**

The opportunity to concentrate on significant educational issues is available to the staff through provision of School Development Days. As this aspect is of central concern to staff, students and the community in general, these days will continue to provide the opportunity for a concentrated focus on student welfare concerns.

**Child Protection**

The Child Protection units are taught each year K-6. As it is required that all teachers and ancillary staff understand their roles and responsibilities in relation to the child protection guidelines, it is the duty of members of the executive to ensure that all staff have access to appropriate documentation and training. Students must have parental approval to participate in Child Protection education.

**Drug Education**

The Drug Education units are taught each year K-6.

**The Student Representative Council (SRC)**

The SRC gives students a role in school administration. This Council includes a member of the executive or Year 6 staff, the school captains, vice captains, prefects and the student council (1 representative from each class, 1-6).

Meetings are held fortnightly and are chaired by the school captain, vice captain and student councillors in turn.

SRC meetings are conducted to discuss:

* + matters brought up by students/class representatives
	+ organisational matters
	+ passing on of information to classes

Roles of the Captain, Vice Captain and Prefects include:

* + assistance in conducting weekly assemblies
	+ assistance in playground management
	+ assistance in canteen duty
	+ conducting special assemblies
	+ representation at outside ceremonies e.g. Anzac Day.

**At all times, students are encouraged to consider the consequences of their actions and to make choices that have positive outcomes.**