

# Effective Schools are Engaging Schools

## Student Engagement Policy Guidelines

Promoting student engagement, attendance  
and positive behaviours in Victorian  
government schools

*Every  
child,  
every  
opportunity*



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# Ministerial foreword



The Victorian government is committed to ensuring that all children and young people, regardless of their circumstances and background, have the opportunity to participate and engage in a world class education system and emerge equipped with the knowledge and skills they need for the future.

The Department has increasingly recognised the vital role of schools in shaping and preparing children and young people for their adult lives. As a result, schools are placing an increasing emphasis on good educational, social as well as wellbeing outcomes.

The Victorian government strongly believes that every student has the right to experience an education system which values their uniqueness, and supports them to become successful adults who are able to make a valuable contribution. We all have a collective responsibility for the learning and wellbeing outcomes of the children and young people in our communities. It is essential that school communities, in particular, understand the diversity of their students and families and offer a responsive and inclusive place for all.

One of the most important things in a child or young person's life is the need to form positive, supportive relationships. As school is the place they spend much of their lives, their relationships with their teacher and peers will lay the foundation for the adults they will become. Schools must strive to be places where students and teachers can relate well to each other, and where different ideas and viewpoints are valued and respected.

*The Effective Schools are Engaging Schools: Student Engagement Policy Guidelines* support all schools to create positive school cultures in which students believe that their differences, ideas, needs and beliefs are valued and respected. Holding high expectations of students not only encourages them to achieve their best at school and in their lives away from the school grounds but will also support them to be independent, happy, healthy and resourceful lifelong learners.

I look forward to working with you to ensure that we can give our children and young people every opportunity they deserve.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bronwyn Pike". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

**Hon Bronwyn Pike MP**

Minister for Education

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- Debney Park Secondary College
- Donald High School
- Kew High School
- Nathalia Secondary College
- Preston North East Primary School
- Richmond West Primary School
- Robinvale Secondary College

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# Introduction

*Effective Schools are Engaging Schools: Student Engagement Policy Guidelines* replace the *Student Attendance Guidelines, 1997* and the *Guidelines for Developing the Student Code of Conduct, 1994*, and aim to assist schools in developing their Student Engagement Policy.

The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development 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 engage and support them in their learning. Student wellbeing and student learning outcomes are inextricably linked, and schools should aim to promote an understanding of this link in both the school environment and in the classroom. It is fundamental to acknowledge that each teacher is a vital source of support and a determinant in the success of their students.

*Effective Schools are Engaging Schools: Student Engagement Policy Guidelines* replace the *Student Attendance Guidelines, 1997* and the *Guidelines for Developing the Student Code of Conduct, 1994*, and aim to assist schools in developing their Student Engagement Policy.

In order to comply with the registration requirements set out by the Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority (VRQA), schools must have policies and procedures in place that provide students with a safe learning environment where the risk of harm is minimised and students feel physically and emotionally secure.

All Victorian government schools are required to develop a Student Engagement Policy and this requirement will be listed on the School Compliance Checklist from 2010.

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Refer to <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/management/schoolimprovement/accountability/checklist.htm>

The Student Engagement Policy articulates the school community's shared expectations in the areas of student engagement, attendance and behaviour. The policy supports the rights and articulates the expectations of every member of the school community to engage in and promote a safe and inclusive educational environment.

The policy should also support each school's capacity to respond to individual student circumstances, when a student begins to disengage from their learning, regular attendance is not consistent or positive behaviours are not demonstrated, by outlining a series of processes, actions and consequences developed in consultation with the school community.

The policy should cover the following components:

- school profile statement
- whole-school prevention statement
- rights and responsibilities
- shared expectations
- principals, teachers and student support staff
- students
- parents/carers
- school actions/consequences.

Student engagement and wellbeing is one of the three key student outcomes that schools and networks are accountable for under the School and Network Accountability and Improvement Frameworks. The goals and targets set by the school and the network to strengthen student engagement and wellbeing reflect the school and network's overall vision and values, and articulate their strategies for improvement.

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For more information, see <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/management/schoolimprovement/accountability/default.htm>



The Student Engagement Policy should be developed in consultation with representatives from all areas of the school community. The principal will be responsible for leading the development and implementation of the policy. The role of the principal and the school council is to ensure that the policy reflects the shared expectations of the whole school community and that all students and parents/carers are clear about these shared expectations.

One of the objectives of a school council under the *Education and Training Reform Act 2006* is to ensure that decisions affecting students at the school give primary consideration to the best interests of the students. (Division 3, Section 2.3.4 (b)). Other objectives in the Act complement this responsibility. Accordingly, the school council will be engaged in the policy's development and approval, and be responsible for monitoring its effectiveness and evaluating its success.



The policy should be made available to all members of the school community. Parents/carers should be provided with a copy of the policy upon student enrolment and informed when the policy is updated.

Meaningful student involvement in the development of the policy will provide valuable information for schools, assist in building relationships and, by giving students a voice, most effectively engage them in the policy implementation.

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The Student Engagement Policy will be supported by a range of Department of Education and Early Childhood Development formal procedures pertaining to attendance and behaviour. This information is available in Elements 3 and 4 of these guidelines and in the Victorian Government Schools Reference Guide at <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/management/governance/referenceguide/default.htm>



# Element 1: Creating positive and engaging school cultures

*‘There is a growing consensus that whatever else is done schools must also become places where it is easier for students and teachers to know one another well and for students to connect to the school and its purposes. Schools in other words must be caring and learning communities.’*

(Sergiovanni 2000, p. 158).

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. This requires a clearly stated philosophy, translated into practice, that student wellbeing is everyone’s responsibility, is a high priority and that social and emotional wellbeing underpin effective student learning and positive behaviour.

Effective schools recognise that they are preparing young people for their adult lives. United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation’s International Commission identifies *learning to know, learning to do, learning to live together, and learning to be* as the pillars of learning for the 21st century. Effective schools focus on the development of student social competencies by embedding such learning opportunities into their pedagogy, curriculum, behaviour management systems, expectations and structures.

Positive school cultures ensure that students feel valued and cared for, have

meaningful opportunities to contribute to the school and can effectively engage with their learning. Effective schools are engaging and inclusive, recognising and responding to the diverse needs of their students, accommodating different learning profiles and rates of learning and intervening early to identify and respond to individual student needs.

Student engagement and school connectedness underpin effective student learning. 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. It can be defined as students’ sense of belonging or connectedness to the school.
- **Cognitive engagement** relates to students’ investment in learning and their intrinsic motivation and self-regulation.

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For more information, see *Schooling Issues Digest, Student Motivation and Engagement* at [http://www.dest.gov.au/sectors/school\\_education/publications\\_resources/schooling\\_issues\\_digest/documents/schooling\\_issues\\_digest\\_motivation\\_engagement\\_pdf.htm](http://www.dest.gov.au/sectors/school_education/publications_resources/schooling_issues_digest/documents/schooling_issues_digest_motivation_engagement_pdf.htm)

Many young people will encounter some difficulty, including learning difficulty, during their school life and will need to be supported by targeted strategies to address such challenges. It is imperative that schools have in place processes to identify and intervene early when an individual student is at risk of disengaging from learning or from school. Risks for students may involve individual, social, emotional or physical factors, or may be related to family or community factors.

All teachers have a responsibility to respond when students experience difficulty with their schooling. Teachers will need to be supported by a planned, sequential and detailed whole-school approach to student support and by professional learning to assist with implementation. Teachers need to *'believe they can make a difference and have a commitment to do so ... [and have]*

*a belief in the capacity of all students to make progress, given sufficient time and support'*. (Hill & Crevola, 1998, pp. 133–57).

A Student Engagement Policy will be most effective when it focuses on:

- creating a positive school culture that is fair and respectful
- building a safe and supportive school environment
- expecting positive, supportive and respectful relationships that value diversity
- promoting pro-social values and behaviours
- encouraging student participation and student voice
- proactively engaging with parents/ carers
- implementing preventative and early intervention approaches
- responding to individual students
- linking to the local community.





## 1.1 Creating a positive school culture

The creation of a positive school culture that is fair and respectful requires consideration of all elements of the Department's *Effective Schools Model*. A particular focus should be 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.

Positive relationships with teachers are important to students. Students want their teachers to recognise them as individuals, not just as learners. Acknowledging the diversity of the student population is central to creating a positive and inclusive school culture. When engagement and wellbeing strategies are incorporated into the school ethos and curriculum, students will be more likely to attend school and participate in a meaningful way. Positive school cultures are learning and caring cultures that promote student belonging and connectedness.

## 1.2 Building a safe and supportive school environment

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

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For more information, see Inclusive Schools are Effective Schools at [www.eduweb.vic.gov.au/edulibrary/public/stuman/wellbeing/Inclusive\\_Schools\\_are\\_Effective\\_Schools-December\\_2006.pdf](http://www.eduweb.vic.gov.au/edulibrary/public/stuman/wellbeing/Inclusive_Schools_are_Effective_Schools-December_2006.pdf)

Effective schools collaboratively develop and implement fair and respectful whole-school behaviour management systems. These whole-school systems are based on pro-social values, social competencies, incentives and positive peer relationships. In effective schools, tolerance and respect are core values of the school philosophy.

Well-run and democratic classrooms are central to the establishment of safe school environments. Teachers in these classrooms involve and engage all students, set high expectations, seek feedback from students and “*give out two messages to every child – ‘you can succeed’ and ‘I will help you do that’.*” (Blum 1996).

Transition programs and practices at the different stages of schooling will minimise anxiety, increase resilience and ensure that students develop a readiness to enter their new environment, and make successful transitions between year levels.

## 1.3 Expecting positive, supportive and respectful relationships that value diversity

An effective school is an inclusive school with a strong moral purpose. It is imperative that all staff, students, parents/carers and members of the whole-school community exhibit positive relationships and value difference, as this supports both a positive school environment and effective classroom learning.

Inclusive classroom teachers know their students and understand their learning needs. They are able to adapt current pedagogical knowledge and thinking and apply it in different ways, so that



each student is engaged in meaningful learning experiences.

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. Schools should also encourage and provide multiple 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.

### 1.4 Promoting pro-social values and behaviours

Promoting and teaching pro-social values and behaviours helps young people to engage with school, their peers, their teachers and their learning. Effective schools and classrooms have clear expectations of individual responsibility and foster positive relationships among students.

Schools' strategies to promote pro-social values should be whole-school in focus and include close links with curriculum. The Victorian Essential Learning Standards (VELS) includes the learning domain of Physical, Personal and Social Learning, which encourages students to work with others, and to take greater responsibility for their own learning and participation at school.

In the context of the VELs, the school curriculum should include pro-social values and behaviour to enable students to acquire knowledge and skills, value diversity and build a culture of learning, community and engagement.

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For more information, see the Victorian Essential Learning Standards at <http://vels.vcaa.vic.edu.au/essential/personal/index.html>

### 1.5 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 students feel valued and empowered.

Giving students a voice is 'not simply about the opportunity to communicate ideas and opinions; it is about having the power to influence change' (West, 2004). Meaningful involvement of students means 'validating and authorising them to represent their own ideas, opinions, knowledge and experiences throughout education in order to improve our schools' (Fletcher, 2005). Schools should allow students to become active participants in their education, including involvement in decisions about what and how they learn, and how their learning is assessed.

By providing opportunities and encouragement for all students to participate in the development of the Student Engagement Policy, schools will promote active student participation and provide students with a sense of ownership of their environment.

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Effective schools and teachers actively seek student feedback and involve students in classroom and school improvement processes. For more information, see Student Voice: A Historical Perspective and New Directions at [http://www.eduweb.vic.gov.au/edulibrary/public/publ/research/publ/Student\\_Voice\\_report.pdf](http://www.eduweb.vic.gov.au/edulibrary/public/publ/research/publ/Student_Voice_report.pdf)

## 1.6 Proactively engaging with parents/carers

Effective involvement of parents/carers and families requires schools to provide an environment that openly engages all families as equal partners in the education of children and young people. All school staff can contribute to the creation of a welcoming culture for parents/carers and families. In turn, schools should foster high parent/carer and family expectations for their school's performance and school completion for their children.

Schools can support families to engage in their child's learning and build their capacity as active learners. In providing an environment that welcomes all parents/carers and is responsive to them as partners in learning, schools will ensure that the unique experiences and skills of their students' families enrich the learning environment and the school community.

Keys to successful partnerships with parents/carers and families include:

- ensuring all parents are aware of the school's Student Engagement Policy
- conducting effective school-to-home and home-to-school communications
- providing volunteer opportunities to enable parents/carers and student 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

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For more information, see Keys to Successful Partnerships: Six Types of Involvement at [http://www.csos.jhu.edu/p2000/nnps\\_model/school/sixtypes/6types.htm](http://www.csos.jhu.edu/p2000/nnps_model/school/sixtypes/6types.htm)

## 1.7 Implementing preventative and early intervention approaches

Implementing preventative and early intervention strategies to support student engagement and address individual barriers to learning are a key part of a Student Engagement Policy.

Prevention strategies should target the whole school community, and are designed to reduce any risk factors that may contribute to attendance or behavioural issues while at the same time increasing protective factors in order to support student engagement and positive behaviour. Prevention strategies should be based on a comprehensive knowledge of the community's and students' needs and therefore provide a solid platform for inclusive educational provision.

Effective early intervention strategies in schools enable early identification of vulnerable students and those at risk of disengagement from school. Effective schools establish social/emotional and educational support for vulnerable students and monitor and evaluate progress.

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 an inclusive and positive school culture. Schools should appreciate the potential strengths and expertise of school community members, and utilise these strengths to engage with the community to build a positive school culture.

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For more information, see the Framework for Student Support Services at <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/healthwellbeing/wellbeing/policy.htm>

## 1.8 Responding to individual students

Schools must have processes in place to identify and respond to individual students who require additional assistance and support. Coordinated early intervention and prevention strategies should utilise relevant school-level or external student wellbeing support services in order to identify and address the barriers to learning that individual students may be facing.

Early intervention is focused on groups that are at higher risk of harm or disengagement from education, and aims to improve their resilience through effective and appropriate support. Strategies are targeted at students displaying inappropriate coping skills, stress reactions, depressive symptoms and other personal and social vulnerabilities.

Research has shown that there are a number of risk factors that increase the chances of young people developing health and behaviour problems. Schools need to be aware of and address these risk factors, including poor school attendance and inappropriate behaviour, while increasing the levels of protection and positive support for the student throughout the course of their development.

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For more information, see the Framework for Student Support Services at <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/healthwellbeing/wellbeing/policy.htm> and the Managed Individual Pathways initiative at <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/sensecyouth/careertrans/mips/default.htm>



## 1.9 Linking to the local community

Linking with the local community gives schools access to an extended network of community members, professionals and educators who can provide expertise and experience that can build the capacity of schools and teachers to respond to the needs of their students.

Children and young people with a meaningful connection to the broader community tend to be more resilient in the face of problems and stress. Partnerships between schools and community-based service providers involve an acceptance of shared responsibility for addressing common areas of concern and a collaborative approach to developing strategies to reach goals. These partnerships can also provide optimum service delivery for vulnerable students.

Collaboration with other schools through network and cluster arrangements is an important way for schools to work together to develop shared approaches for students at risk of disengagement.

For more information, see the *School Focused Youth Service* at <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/healthwellbeing/wellbeing/sfys.htm>

## 1.10 School Accountability and Improvement Framework

The Student Engagement Policy should be linked to the work that each school undertakes as part of the School Accountability and Improvement Framework. The policy should therefore be developed and reviewed at the same time as schools are undertaking their strategic planning process to ensure that school strategic and annual implementation plans continue to

reflect changing approaches to student engagement, attendance and positive behaviour. It will also ensure that the goals, targets and key improvement strategies within these plans reflect the key principles and support the prevention and early intervention focus of a Student Engagement Policy.

Schools should use these guidelines alongside the range of material on the School Accountability and Improvement Framework website when working through their self-evaluation, strategic planning and annual implementation planning processes. Information gathered during the year of self-evaluation review and planning will inform the development of the school's policy.

The School Accountability and Improvement Framework provides for school development of student engagement and wellbeing goals and targets. The components of the School Accountability and Improvement Framework support schools to undertake long-term planning to create positive school environments. This planning should be action oriented, with long-term goals and targets being linked to short-term actions. These actions will assist in the implementation of the school's vision and should be known and understood by the whole-school community.

Reviewing measures to promote student engagement and wellbeing is crucial to supporting a culture of continuous improvement. Comprehensive review and self-evaluation are important components of the School Accountability and Improvement Framework. Schools should also reflect on the effectiveness of the actions taken and strategies put in place to support student engagement and wellbeing through the school annual reporting process.

## Element 2: Developing a Student Engagement Policy

All Victorian government schools are required to develop a Student Engagement Policy. This requirement will be listed on the School Compliance Checklist.

### 2.1 Student Engagement Policy

The guiding principles for the development of a Student Engagement Policy include:

- having a comprehensive understanding of the diversity of the whole-school community
- focusing on prevention
- identifying and supporting students who are or may be at risk
- thinking critically and creatively about data collection.

The policy will articulate each school community's shared expectations in the areas of student engagement, attendance and behaviour. The policy will support the rights of all members of the school community to engage in and promote a safe, inclusive and supportive learning environment.

The policy will also support each school's capacity to respond to individual student circumstances when regular attendance is not consistent or positive behaviours are not demonstrated. This will be achieved by outlining a series of actions, processes and consequences developed in consultation with the school community.

Student engagement and wellbeing is one of the three key student outcomes that schools and networks are accountable for under the both the School and the Network Accountability and Improvement Frameworks. The goals and targets set by the school and the network for strengthening student engagement and wellbeing reflect the school and network's overall vision and values, and articulate their strategies for improvement.

As the Student Engagement Policy should align with the work that each school undertakes as part of the School

Accountability and Improvement Framework, it should be developed and reviewed during the school strategic planning process.

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Schools should use these guidelines in conjunction with the range of material on the School Accountability and Improvement Framework website when going through their self-evaluation, strategic planning and annual implementation planning processes. For more information, see the School Accountability and Improvement Framework at <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/management/schoolimprovement/accountability/default.htm>

The Student Engagement Policy should be developed in consultation with representatives from all areas of the school community. The principal will be responsible for leading the development and implementation of the policy. One of the objectives of a school council under the *Education and Training Reform Act 2006* is to ensure that decisions affecting students at the school are made primarily in the best interests of the students (Division 3, Section 2.3.4 (b)). Other objectives in the Act complement this responsibility. Accordingly, the school council will be engaged in the development and the approval of the policy, and will be responsible for monitoring its effectiveness and evaluating its success.

The policy should be made available to all members of the school community. Parents/carers should be provided with a copy of the policy upon student enrolment and all parents/carers should be informed when the policy is updated.

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The Student Engagement Policy will be supported by a range of Department of Education and Early Childhood Development formal procedures pertaining to attendance and behaviour. This information is available in Elements 3 and 4 of these guidelines and in the Victorian Government Schools Reference Guide at <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/management/governance/referenceguide/default.htm>

## 2.2 Components of the Student Engagement Policy

A Student Engagement Policy should include the following components:

- school profile statement
- whole-school prevention statement
- rights and responsibilities
- shared expectations – school, parents/carers, students
- school actions and consequences.

### 2.2.1 School profile statement

The school profile statement should focus on student engagement and wellbeing issues. It should reflect a detailed understanding of the diversity of the student population and school community.

Schools will need to access a variety of data sources to gain a comprehensive understanding of the diversity of their school community and the engagement and wellbeing needs of their students. Data should include feedback from students, parents/carers and the broader community.

The school evaluation resources in the School Accountability and Improvement Framework can assist schools in this process.

### 2.2.2 Whole-school prevention statement

Schools should develop a positive statement about the school's values and philosophy, and the related programs and strategies being implemented by the school to promote student engagement, high attendance and positive behaviours. Element 1 of these guidelines provides an overview of areas for consideration in the development of strategies for whole-school prevention.

This section of the policy should reflect the engagement and wellbeing goals and targets, and related school improvement strategies and actions identified through the school strategic and annual implementation planning process.

### 2.2.3 Rights and responsibilities

Every member of the school community has a right to fully participate in an educational environment that is safe, supportive and inclusive. Everyone deserves to be treated with respect and dignity.

In consultation with the whole-school community, schools should develop a statement of rights that is agreed on by and applicable to all students, teachers and parents/carers.

When developing a Student Engagement Policy, schools should consider their legal responsibilities under relevant legislation, including the *Equal Opportunity Act 1995*, the *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006*, the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* and the *Education and Training Reform Act 2006*.

The *Equal Opportunity Act 1995* sets out the types or grounds of discrimination that are unlawful and aims to promote community recognition and acceptance of the equality of men and women, and the equality of people of all races, regardless of their religious or political convictions, their impairments or their age.

The *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006* outlines a vision of human rights for all Victorians. The charter affirms that all people are born free and equal in dignity and rights. While the charter demands equality for all, it also emphasises the value of difference.

The charter requires public authorities, including government schools and their employees, to act compatibly with human rights and to consider human rights when making decisions and delivering services.

Schools are asked to refer to departmental advice to schools on the Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities at <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/studentlearning/programs/multicultural/tchhrcharter.htm> and to complete the Charter Compliance Checklist to assist them in complying with the charter.

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For more information, see the *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006* at [http://www.austlii.edu.au/au/legis/vic/consol\\_act/cohrra2006433/](http://www.austlii.edu.au/au/legis/vic/consol_act/cohrra2006433/)

In developing a Student Engagement Policy, schools should refer to the Disability Standards for Education 2005. The standards clarify and make more explicit the obligations on schools and the rights of students under the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992*. The standards cover enrolment, participation, curriculum development, student support services, and harassment and victimisation.

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Copies of the Disability Standards for Education are available at <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/healthwellbeing/wellbeing/disability/handbook/legislation.htm>

Schools must include a statement about bullying and cyber bullying behaviours in this section of their Student Engagement Policy.

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For more information, see Safe Schools are Effective Schools at <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/healthwellbeing/safety/bullying/default.htm> and departmental advice to schools on cyber bullying at <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/healthwellbeing/safety/bullying/cyber/default.htm>



## 2.2.4 Shared expectations

### Characteristics of shared expectations in effective schools.

Effective schools share high expectations for the whole-school community. Shared expectations are:

- jointly negotiated, owned and implemented by all members of the school community, including students
- clear and specific
- focused on positive and pro-social behaviours
- focused on prevention and early intervention
- supported by relevant procedures
- consistent, fair and reasonable
- linked to appropriate actions and consequences.

### Schools – principals, teachers and school staff

Schools have a responsibility to provide an educational environment that ensures that all students are valued and cared for, feel they are part of the school, and can engage effectively in their learning and experience success.

School expectations should include statements that reflect:

- the school's values
- inclusive teaching practices
- accessible educational provision for all students
- parent/carer partnerships and liaison
- community partnerships
- provision of appropriate student services
- development and provision of appropriate, relevant and challenging curriculum that gives students the opportunity to experience success in their learning.

Schools should include information on how they will address and celebrate

diversity within their school community. They should consider the inclusion of the separate responsibilities of principals, teachers and wellbeing staff to ensure that students and parents/carers have a clear understanding of what can be expected from the school.

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In developing shared expectations of teachers, reference should be made to the Victorian Teaching Profession Code of Conduct at [http://www.vit.vic.edu.au/content.asp?Document\\_ID=25](http://www.vit.vic.edu.au/content.asp?Document_ID=25).

### Students

As students progress through school they need to be encouraged and supported to take greater responsibility for their own learning and participation as members of the whole school community. This involves developing as individual learners who increasingly manage their own learning and growth by setting goals and managing resources to achieve these goals.

Students should, with support, be expected by their parents/carers and their school to participate fully in the school's educational program and to attend regularly. Students should also be expected to display positive behaviours that demonstrate respect for themselves, their peers, their teachers and all other members of the school community.

Demonstration of respect for the rights of others, including the right to learn, will contribute to an engaging educational experience for themselves and other students.

Students' engagement, attendance and behavioural expectations should be framed using positive language to support and encourage safe and inclusive behaviour.

Schools may like to include information on how students' behaviour could

contribute to the educational, social, emotional and physical development of themselves and those around them, or information on specific ways that students should relate to those around them.

Actively teaching students whole-school engagement, attendance and behavioural expectations creates a highly predictable environment that allows students to understand what is expected of them and what they can expect from each other.

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Schools must include a statement about bullying behaviours, including cyber bullying, in this section. Information about cyber bullying can be found at <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/healthwellbeing/safety/bullying/cyber/default.htm> and in Working with the Web: A Guide to Ethical and Safe Use of the Internet in Victorian Schools at <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/management/elearningsupportservices/www/default.htm>

### Parents/carers

Parents/carers can be expected to promote positive educational outcomes for their children by taking an active interest in their child's educational progress. Parental cooperation with the school, including regular and constructive communication with school staff regarding their child's learning and wellbeing, will actively support their child's engagement in the school environment.

Parents/carers can also be expected to support the school in maintaining a safe and respectful learning environment for all students.

Schools may choose to include more specific information in their Student Engagement Policy on how parents/carers can support the school, or how they can support their children by ensuring regular attendance, modelling

positive behaviours and assisting their children with their school work.

### 2.2.5 School actions and consequences

Student engagement, regular attendance and appropriate behaviours are encouraged through the implementation of whole-school strategies supported by targeted and individualised support when required (see Element 1).

When developing actions and consequences, schools must ensure that they are developed in consultation with and agreed on by representatives from the whole-school community, including students. This will foster a cohesive and consistent response to poor attendance and inappropriate behaviour. These actions and consequences should be incremental (a staged response) and should be applied fairly and consistently.

Applying fair and consistent discipline and attendance policies that are collectively agreed on and fairly enforced increases the likelihood that student connection to school is maintained.

Equal emphasis should be placed on issuing positive consequences for meeting high expectations as there is on negative consequences.

Actions and consequences should have an educational role and aim to foster positive relationships and retain the dignity of the student. Actions and consequences that isolate a student from learning should be avoided where possible.

Student engagement, regular attendance and positive behaviours are supported most effectively through relationship-based whole-school and classroom practices, including:

- establishing predictable, fair and democratic classrooms and school environments
- ensuring student participation in the development of classroom and whole-school expectations
- providing personalised learning programs
- consistently acknowledging all students
- empowering students by creating multiple opportunities for them to take responsibility and be involved in decision-making
- providing physical environments conducive to positive behaviours and effective engagement in learning
- implementing school-wide positive and educative behaviour support strategies.

Inappropriate behaviours, including irregular attendance, can be responded to through a staged response that has a prevention and early intervention, data-based focus, including:

- understanding the student
- ensuring a clear understanding of expectations by both students and teachers
- providing consistent school and classroom environments
- scaffolding the student's learning program.

Broader support strategies include:

- involving and supporting the parents/carers,
- involving the student wellbeing coordinator, managed individual pathways or careers coordinators
- tutoring/peer tutoring
- mentoring and/or counselling
- convening student support group meetings – the student support group is an important component

of the staged response for students facing difficulty with engagement, attendance or behaviour

- developing individualised flexible learning, behaviour or attendance plans
- providing broader educational programs, for example experiential learning, work education, camps/outdoor education/creative arts
- involving community support agencies.

#### Discipline procedures – suspension and expulsion

A student should only be excluded from school in situations where all other measures have been implemented without success or where an immediate suspension is the only appropriate course of action in response to the student's behaviour.

The school actions and consequences section of the School Engagement Policy should be framed in a positive way to encourage students to accept responsibility for their actions, and to participate fully and positively in their educational experience. It is important that schools view exclusions only when all other options have been exhausted or where the wellbeing or safety of another student is at risk.

#### Roles and responsibilities of the principal and school council

The principal is responsible for leading the development and implementation of the Student Engagement Policy. The school council will be engaged in the development of the policy, as it will be responsible for approving the policy, monitoring its effectiveness and evaluating its success. The policy should be made available to all members of the school community.

## Element 3: Promoting school 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.

The *Education and Training Reform Act 2006* sets out basic legal requirements for attendance. In Victoria, young people between six and 16 years of age (inclusive) must be enrolled in a registered school or registered for home schooling in accordance with the Act and the *Education and Training Reform Regulations 2007*.

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.

### 3.1 Whole-school strategies

Effective schools promote and maintain high levels of student attendance and participation through:

- articulating high expectations to all members of the school community
- 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
- providing early identification of and supportive intervention for students at risk of non-attendance
- linking with local community groups and agencies to maximise program and individual support
- providing a staged response (see Element 5, Appendix 2).

The Student Engagement Policy and the engagement and wellbeing goals and targets in the School Strategic and Annual Implementation Plans provide for the development of whole-school strategies that foster full student attendance and participation. Successful whole-school approaches to attendance should identify effective prevention and early intervention strategies such as:

- clear written and verbal statements made regularly to parents/carers and students about school and community attendance expectations
- promotion of awareness that absence results in quantifiable lost learning time and opportunities
- whole-school modelling of punctuality
- delegation of responsibilities to all staff, with a key member of staff leading attendance improvement initiatives
- regular discussions on student attendance in staff meetings and in the staff performance and development review process
- understanding of the causal factors of absence, and the need for targeted interventions
- implementation of effective and supportive transition programs, including student transitions between different learning areas and levels within the school, and pathways and careers support programs
- class and home group structures and environments that enable opportunities for increased connectedness to individual teachers and peers
- Individual Student Learning Plans, including attendance and punctuality goals
- provision of out-of-school programs, including breakfast, homework and walking bus clubs

- structures and activities encouraging parents/carers' involvement in the life of the school
- collaborative and cooperative programs with other schools, community groups and agencies.

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 absences
- developing collaborative and empowering relationships between teachers, students and parents/carers
- inclusive practices, such as the translation of materials, the use of interpreters and flexibility in meeting arrangements
- organising attendance-focused meetings with parents/carers and students
- forming student support groups to enable a coordinated response to support for individual students and parents/carers
- individual student attendance goal setting and data-driven improvement plans
- transparent and immediate follow-up of any problems identified by students and parents/carers
- formal procedures for supporting the learning of a student absent for an extended period
- positive and flexible support and follow-up with students on their return to school, including the use of Return to School Plans and modification of learning outcomes where required
- referring of individual students and parents/carers to community agencies for additional support.

Additional prevention and early intervention strategies are outlined in It's Not OK to Be Away at <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/healthwellbeing/wellbeing/attendance/initiative.htm>

## 3.2 Shared expectations for attendance

Ensuring that students attend school each day is the shared expectation of all parents/carers, students and the school. This should be underpinned by shared understandings and expectations about the procedures for the promotion, monitoring and follow-up of student attendance. Attendance follow-up procedures should identify the reason for a student's absence from school, in consultation with the student's parents/carers.

The *Education and Training Reform Act 2006* describes a reasonable excuse for a student not attending school as being due to:

- illness, accident, an unforeseen event or an unavoidable cause
- no government school within a prescribed distance of the child's residence and the child receiving a distance education program through a registered school
- the child undertaking an educational program provided by a registered education and training organisation
- the child being suspended or expelled and undertaking other educational programs provided by the Department or another registered school
- the child's disobedience, not due to any fault of the parents/carers
- the child attending or observing a religious event or obligation as a result of a genuinely held belief of the child or child's parents/carers
- exemption from attendance at school by the Minister.

### 3.2.1 Expectations – parents/carers

Parents/carers are required to:

- ensure that their child attends school at all times when the school is open for

instruction (see *Education and Training Reform Act 2006*, Section 2.1.1)

- promote and provide organisational support to 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
- notify the school of their child's absence as soon as possible on the first day of the 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 through the implementation of an agreed Student Absence Learning Plan (see Element 5, Appendix 6)
- work cooperatively and collaboratively with the school to develop and implement improvement strategies when attendance has been inconsistent due to reasons deemed unsatisfactory by the school
- work cooperatively with the school in supporting the child to return to school and reintegrate after prolonged absence (see Element 5, Appendix 7)
- ensure that contact details for the child are correct and up to date.

### 3.2.2 Expectations – students

Students are expected to:

- attend school at all times when the school is open for instruction
- arrive on time to school and to every class
- provide a written explanation from their parents/carers to their teachers when they have been absent from school
- remain on the school premises during school time unless they have the permission to leave from both the school and their parents/carers
- work with their teacher to develop learning activities to be included in the

Student Absence Learning Plan and to be completed during a prolonged absence

- work cooperatively with the school to develop personal attendance improvement goals and strategies when their attendance has been inconsistent.

### 3.2.3 Expectations – schools

Schools are expected to:

- promote student attendance through clear statements of expectations and procedures
- develop and implement rigorous and effective systems to record and monitor attendance
- ensure that student attendance is recorded twice per day in primary schools and in every class in secondary schools
- maintain accurate attendance records on CASES21 (or another suitable system that is able to download all codes and data from CASES 21) using appropriate codes (see Element 5, Appendix 10)
- ensure the prompt processing of student transfers by immediately contacting the student's transferring school upon the student's enrolment at their new school
- monitor and analyse school attendance records regularly and utilise the Student Mapping Tool for early identification and the provision of timely, targeted support to students at risk of poor attendance and possible disengagement from school
- monitor and follow up all individual cases of student absence promptly and consistently. Schools should ensure that wherever possible, parents/carers are aware of student absences on the same day of the absence. It is the principal's responsibility to keep parents/carers informed of the absence

of post-compulsory age students

- pursue and record an explanation for every absence
- work collaboratively with parents/carers and students to develop an agreed Student Absence Learning Plan when a student will be absent from school for an extended period of time (see Element 5, Appendix 6). This process should involve discussion with the parents/carers about the possible impact of the proposed absence on the student's learning, and the determination of an appropriate learning plan for the time spent away from school
- convene a student support group meeting which is attendance focused with parents/carers and students when a student's attendance pattern is of concern to the school. The outcome of the meeting should lead to the development of an Individual Learning Plan to improve the student's attendance (see Element 5, Appendix 1)
- provide ongoing intensive support for students if communication with parents/carers has not been possible or if the student's attendance pattern continues to be a problem after the initial student support group meeting (see Element 3, Section 3.4.2).

## 3.3 Recording attendance

The attendance roll is a permanent record of the attendance of all students. Recording student attendance is required by legislation as it is essential to:

- monitor the legal requirement for students between six and 16 years to attend school
- discharge schools' duty of care for all students, including those over the compulsory school age
- monitor and follow up student absences

- supply accurate information for the census audit and school funding purposes
- provide accurate information for reporting
- support effective emergency management procedures.

CASES21 supports school management of student attendance by:

- providing the ability to record, manage and report on both half-day and period absences
- providing secure access to absence data for follow-up of absences
- facilitating reporting to satisfy Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE) and Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning (VCAL) requirements
- enabling schools to import half-day attendance information from external electronic roll-marking products to meet census and benchmark accountability reporting requirements
- enabling schools to categorise different reasons for absence.

The student absence module in CASES21 provides schools with the ability to facilitate the recording of student attendance for each half-day. Schools are encouraged to develop or import their timetable into CASES21, as this enables schools to record attendance at the class/period level.

Schools using external electronic roll-marking systems for their day-to-day student attendance management are encouraged to import half-day attendance data to CASES21 for benchmark, school accountability and data retention purposes.

CASES21 provides categories (codes) for recording particular types of absence (see Element 5, Appendix 10). It is important to accurately identify the reason for a student's absence as this

will help shape a targeted response to support the student. Consistent use of absence categories (CASES21 codes) enables the school to generate a range of school-level reports that enables more effective analysis of student absence data (see Element 5, Appendix 11). This allows schools to identify absence trends and implement both whole-school strategies and targeted support for individual students.

When students transfer schools, the transfer date to be entered onto CASES21 is the date that the student last attended classes at the transferring school.

Principals should note that there are attendance requirements for inclusion of students in the census count for purposes of calculating the school's Student Resource Package (SRP).

### 3.4 Monitoring attendance

All information received must be recorded using consistent procedures. Initially when a student absence is identified it should be recorded as unexplained in CASES21 unless an explanation has been provided. This record should be amended when a satisfactory explanation is provided following contact with parents/carers.

When a student is absent, the parents/carers are required to provide an explanation of the absence. This explanation should be received on the day of the absence. A written explanation must be forwarded to the school when the student returns.

If the parents/carers' explanation for an absence is deemed satisfactory, the cause of absence must be recorded and entered into CASES21 or equivalent.

Schools must take into account that a written excuse offered by parents/carers is not necessarily a satisfactorily

explained absence if the school does not accept the validity of that excuse.

All absence notes and records of communication must be retained and stored at the school for a minimum period of one year.

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 increase 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.

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For additional information, see the Ultranet website at <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/management/ultranet/default.htm>

### 3.5 Attendance follow-up

If, within three days of the initial absence, the parents/carers fail to provide an explanation, or the explanation provided is deemed unsatisfactory by the school, contact must again be made with the parents/carers requesting a satisfactory explanation. A letter can be generated using CASES21 to support this process.

If, following contact via letter or email, the parents/carers' explanation is deemed satisfactory, the accurate cause of absence must be recorded and entered into CASES21 or equivalent. If there has been no response or satisfactory explanation provided within 10 school days of the initial absence, the absence should be recorded as an unexplained absence in CASES21 and must also be noted in the student's file.

Attendance meetings with parents/carers and students should be convened following initial contact with the parents/carers, when a student's attendance pattern is of concern to the school. The purpose of these meetings is to review strategies initiated to support the student's attendance and to examine why non-attendance has not been resolved. The meeting should establish a shared understanding of accountability and strategies for improving the attendance of the student. Ideally, the student should be involved in the process of problem identification and improvement goal setting (see Element 5, Appendix 7). Meetings should be supportive rather than disciplinary and should focus on proactive solutions. It is important that transparent and immediate action is taken on any problems identified by the parents/carers or the student.

For ongoing intensive support of students, a student support group should be convened by the principal (or nominee) and attended by relevant teachers, relevant school student service support staff, parents/carers and the student (if appropriate). Professionals from other agencies (for example, a youth worker) may also attend as appropriate with the permission of the parents/carers.

The purposes of this meeting are to ensure that the parents/carers are aware of the absences and fully appreciate the educational implications for the student, identify the reasons for the student's absences and develop a Student Attendance Improvement Plan (see Element 5, Appendix 7) and/or an Individual Learning Plan (see Element 5, Appendix 1).



The purpose of an Individual Learning Plan is to develop and monitor an appropriate program of assistance and support for the student, and should include action such as:

- determining agreed expectations
- establishing personal contact
- increasing supervision of the student
- providing personal support and counselling for the student
- referring the student to support agencies
- making return-to-school arrangements and offering support.

A Return to School Plan can be implemented to assist in the reintegration of the student after a prolonged absence (see Element 5, Appendix 7). This plan should be developed with the student and parents/carers and include information such as:

- the student's timetable
- important school dates and times, including bell times
- learning outcomes to be completed and due dates
- the student's personal goals and strategies to improve attendance
- the names and locations of contact teachers
- procedures for notification to the school of future absence.

For both informal and formal meetings with parents/carers, principals need to ensure that appropriate supports are provided (for example, interpreters, advocates) in order to facilitate the involvement of parents/carers.

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The Student Mapping Tool has been developed to assist schools to identify students at risk of early leaving or disengagement. It can be used to support effective tracking and support program strategies. For additional information, see <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/studentmappingtool>

When a school feels that they have exhausted all strategies for addressing a student's unsatisfactory attendance, the regional office should be contacted to provide additional advice and support.

### 3.6 Student attendance exemptions

Exemption is the granting of permission by order of the Minister for Education under the *Education and Training Reform Act 2006* for a student to either cease enrolment prior to the compulsory school-leaving age, or to be absent from school under a departmental arrangement approved by the Minister. Regional directors have delegated authority from the Minister for Education to grant such 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.

A reasonable excuse for not attending school includes undertaking a program with a registered education and training organisation. For students under 16 years of age, this requires an exemption from school. Applications for exemption must be made in writing by the parents/carers to the relevant regional director via the school principal. In considering an application, regional directors will take into account the advice of the school principal concerning:

- the short- and long-term benefits to the student

- the student’s educational needs, attitudes and employment prospects.

The only justification for such arrangements should be that they are judged essential to sustain the student’s continuing or future attendance and engagement at school.

Exemptions must constitute part of an Individual Learning Plan and be monitored by the school (see Element 5, Appendix 1). During the student’s absence from school, the parents/carers and/or employer are legally responsible for the student.

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If the reason for seeking an exemption is for the purpose of a child of school age attending a second year of kindergarten, the Department’s application form is located at <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/management/governance/preschool-schoolage.htm>

### 3.7 Students employed in the entertainment industry

Most applications for exemption from school attendance of compulsory school-age students are from parents/carers who wish their children to be employed in the entertainment industry.

As with any application for student exemption, the school principal must deal directly with the student’s parents/carers. Under no circumstances should a school negotiate a request directly with an employer or agent.

Exemption from attendance for employment in the entertainment industry may be granted by the principal based on the view that the proposed absence for employment will

not adversely affect the child or young person’s engagement with education.

The Department of Innovation, Industry and Regional Development has set out procedures concerning the employment of young people.

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For further information including tutoring requirements for children employed in the entertainment industry, see the Business Victoria website at [http://www.business.vic.gov.au/scripts/nc.dll?BUSVIC:STANDARD:1001:pc=pc=PC\\_60947.html](http://www.business.vic.gov.au/scripts/nc.dll?BUSVIC:STANDARD:1001:pc=pc=PC_60947.html)

## 3.8 Non-school-based attendance

### 3.8.1 Offsite curriculum programs

There are a range of arrangements in place whereby students enrolled in a secondary school may undertake curriculum or programs away from the school site. These include school-based Apprentices, VET in schools, VCAL personal development curriculum undertaken in community settings and delivery of VCE Dance by external providers. Expectations about student attendance at these settings is the same as for students attending classes or programs on the school site.

### 3.8.2 Structured workplace learning arrangements

A student who is 16 years or older and undertaking a course of study that leads to a senior secondary certificate accredited by the VRQA may be placed with an employer for training as part of that course of study. For this to happen, an arrangement about the placement of the student with the employer

must be made between the principal, the employer, the student and, if the student is under the age of 18 years, the student’s parents/carers. This arrangement cannot include any period of placement at a skills or training centre that is not operated by the employer or is not under the direct control of the employer. The appropriateness of the arrangement is to be determined by the principal.

### 3.8.3 Home schooling

Home schooling in Victoria is a legally recognised alternative to attending a registered school (government or non-government) during the compulsory years of schooling. Parents/carers who decide to educate their child from a home base assume overall responsibility for their child or young person’s educational program.

If parents/carers contact the school to inform the school of their intention to home-school their child, the principal should inform the parents/carers in writing of their legal responsibility to register with the VRQA.

Principals should also ensure that the appropriate staff member notes on CASES21 that the child or young person is transferring to home schooling, with this to be listed as an exit destination option for students in both primary and secondary schools.

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Further information about home schooling, including support materials for the registration of home schooling in Victoria, is available at <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/aboutschool/enrolling/homeschool.htm>



## Element 4: Promoting positive behaviours through a staged response



### 4.1 Promoting positive behaviours through a staged response

The Department 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. Schools should aim to promote the link between wellbeing and learning in every aspect of their curriculum, school culture and environment.

The Student Engagement Policy and the engagement and wellbeing goals and targets within the School Strategic and Annual Implementation Plans provide for the development of a whole-school environment that fosters positive student behaviour.

### 4.2 A staged response

Positive behaviours are most effectively supported through relationship-based whole-school and classroom practices.

However, it is recognised that some individuals and groups of students require additional support in the development of pro-social, positive behaviours. For most of these children and young people, the development of pro-social behaviour is achieved in stages, and requires reinforcement and acknowledgement to support each step towards positive improvement.

Some students who are at risk of disengagement from their learning require evidence-based, targeted interventions that are monitored

regularly to assist them to improve their wellbeing and educational performance. These students are best supported in calm, consistent and predictable school classrooms and environments that recognise their individual needs and provide appropriate support.

Students with problem behaviours can be responded to through a staged response (see Element 5, Appendix 2).

#### 4.2.1 Prevention

Implementing preventative and early intervention strategies to support positive behaviours is a key part of a Student Engagement Policy. Prevention and early intervention strategies should:

- define and teach school-wide and classroom expectations
- establish consistent school-wide and classroom consequences for problem behaviour
- establish school-wide and classroom processes for early identification of students experiencing academic and/or behaviour difficulty
- provide school-wide and classroom processes for ongoing collection and use of data for decision-making
- empower students by creating multiple opportunities for them to take responsibility and be involved in decision-making
- provide a physical environment conducive to positive behaviours and effective engagement in learning
- utilise evidence-based interventions, monitored regularly for those students who face difficulty with learning and/or behaviour.

*Calmer Classrooms: A Guide to Working with Traumatized Children*, developed by the Office of the Child Safety Commissioner, provides teachers and schools with effective relationship-based classroom and school-wide

prevention and intervention practices for supporting the learning and wellbeing of children and young people, particularly those who have suffered trauma.

For additional information, see [http://www.ocsc.vic.gov.au/downloads/calmer\\_classrooms.pdf](http://www.ocsc.vic.gov.au/downloads/calmer_classrooms.pdf)

#### 4.2.2 Intervention

When concerns arise about a student's behaviour, or when a student is displaying chronic patterns of problem behaviour, a more targeted response may be required to support the child or young person. It is important that intervention strategies meet the following criteria.

- Targeted interventions should be based on systemic collection and analysis of data.
- Intervention strategies should include the teaching and/or building of pro-social replacement behaviours.
- Progress should be measured and support reduced slowly and gradually.
- Intervention practices should occur in the classroom as the first option and should always involve the classroom teacher/s.
- Both academic and social strategies should be addressed.
- Partnerships should involve and support parents/carers.
- The formation of a student support group is a critical element in the staged response.

#### 4.2.3 Student support group

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 or young person's learning, social, emotional, behavioural and environmental needs,

and the support or resources the student requires for improvement

- involve key specialist learning and wellbeing support staff, for example the literacy coach, student welfare coordinator, primary welfare officer, reading recovery teacher and/or school psychologist
- develop an Individual Learning Plan with the student's classroom teacher/s and ensure support to implement the plan
- support referrals to community support agencies for specialist interventions delivered in partnership with the student support group school strategies.

Meetings of student support groups must involve:

- school principal (or delegate)
- student (as appropriate)
- student's main classroom teacher, the form/home-room teacher or the year level coordinator
- parents/carers
- professionals who have been supporting the student or their family, for example the student welfare coordinator, psychologist, youth worker etc.

Parents/carers may be accompanied and supported by an advocate at a student support group meeting. Parents/carers are required to organise the attendance of this advocate, who cannot act for a fee or reward. The role of the advocate is to provide emotional and moral support to the student and/or their parents/carers, and to act as a witness to the process of the student support group. The advocate should attend only as an observer, and should refrain from directing the process or answering questions on behalf of the student or their parents/carers. The only circumstances in which the advocate should speak on behalf of or participate in the student support group is when a

language or communication barrier has been previously identified by the student, their parents/carers or the school.

If the student is in out-of-home care, the principal must ensure that the student's Department of Human Services (DHS) case manager attends any student support group meetings, as well as any adult who normally or regularly resides with the student.

Refer to the Partnering Agreement for Students in Out-of-Home Care at <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/healthwellbeing/wellbeing/oohc/default.htm>

The Department provides a range of wellbeing and learning resources for schools to assist in the development of a staged response to students who present with behaviour and learning difficulties.

For additional information, see <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/healthwellbeing/>

#### 4.2.4 Examples of whole-school approaches

##### Kids Matter

In recent years, there has been an increased emphasis placed on the importance of promoting and preventing mental health issues in primary school students. Kids Matter promotes mental health within a whole school positive behaviour framework. In addition, the Kids Matter framework is focused on promoting positive social and emotional learning as well as engaging with parents and the wider school community to ensure children are supported.

For more information on the Kids Matter framework, and to find out how Kids Matter fits with other existing programs, refer to the Kids Matter Program Guide <http://www.kidsmatter.edu.au/resources/programs-guide/> For information on the Festival for Healthy Living, a mental health program that can be utilised as a whole-school approach, refer to [http://www.rch.org.au/fhl/index.cfm?doc\\_id=3967](http://www.rch.org.au/fhl/index.cfm?doc_id=3967)

### **School-wide – positive behaviour support**

Introducing, modelling and reinforcing positive social behaviour are important components of a student's educational experience. School-wide – positive behaviour support (SW-PBS) promotes the proactive approach of teaching behavioural expectations and rewarding students for following them as a proactive approach rather than waiting for the misbehaviour to occur before responding.

The purpose of SW-PBS is to establish a school climate in which appropriate behaviour is the norm for all students. It provides schools with a well-researched, evidence-based framework for improving the engagement of all students, including those with behavioural difficulties. It provides school communities with an effective, evidence-based approach to creating positive, safe and engaging school environments and focuses on three levels of intervention: primary, secondary and tertiary prevention.

SW-PBS is currently being implemented in some schools in Victoria, Queensland, New South Wales and Tasmania. (For more information regarding SW-PBS, see Element 5, Appendix 3.)

### **Restorative practices**

The interest in restorative justice principles and practices in Victorian schools has increased in recent years. The main reasons for the introduction of restorative practices can be categorised in two ways:

- to improve student behaviour management outcomes
- as one of a range of school improvement strategies, particularly in the social–emotional domain such as social skills and student engagement (DEET 2004).

Restorative practices are best incorporated within a whole-school approach and can be represented by a range of informal and formal strategies such as use of effective language, class circles and community conferencing. Restorative practices involve the use of transferable values and principles to promote social equity in relationships, 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 (Morrison 2005) 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. (For more information and references regarding Restorative Practices, see Element 5, Appendix 4.)

## **4.3 Student discipline procedures – suspension and expulsion**

### **4.3.1 Suspension – guiding principles**

‘Suspended students are the least likely to have the personal or family capacity to help themselves out of their difficulties. They need school and adult support’ (ACER 2004).

Students should only be excluded from school when all other measures have been implemented without success, or where an immediate suspension is the only appropriate course of action given the student's behaviour.

If a student is suspended it should be for the shortest time necessary. The period of suspension should be used by the school, the student and the student's parents/carers as an opportunity to reflect on the present difficulties and develop positive, student-focused re-engagement strategies.

Appropriate and meaningful school work must be provided to the suspended student. This work must be consistent with work provided in the student's classes. While completion of the work is not a requirement for re-entry to school, parents/carers can assist the process by ensuring that the work is completed.

At any time during a suspension, parents/carers can request that a student support group meeting be convened.

The principal is responsible for student suspensions. The principal has two options available; in-school or out-of-school suspensions. In determining which option is the most appropriate, the principal should consider the educational, social and emotional impacts on the student and school community.

One option, schools may wish to explore, is in-school suspension which can have a number of positive outcomes, both for the school and the student:

- suspended student and the rest of the class can be continued, uninterrupted
- The need for increased, individualised academic assistance can be easily identified and be provided where required
- Time can be allocated for individual support for the suspended student and their parents/carers (if appropriate)
- Allow the school another element in the staged response, allowing out-of-school suspensions to be used for the most extreme behavioral issues.

In-school suspensions should focus on encouraging students to exhibit more positive behaviour, to increase their level of participation and, where appropriate, to learn problem solving and/or conflict resolution skills. Students should be challenged, both academically and behaviourally, during the period of their suspension, and schools should use this time to provide students with an increased level of support that may not otherwise be available during class time. In-school suspensions should have an appropriate educational focus and, wherever possible, should be relevant to the behaviour for which the student was suspended.

Some effective strategies for in-school suspension include:

- Pairing the student up with an experienced teacher or appropriate staff member for the day, accompanying that teacher to classes
- Utilising staff-supervised peer support or mentoring programs
- Participating in a work-based in-school suspension (eg. working outdoors, gardening, preparation of educational materials). However focus should not be on punitive measures such as picking up rubbish, but on work-based activities that have an educational value.
- Providing a dedicated room or area where students can complete their in-school suspension under appropriate supervision
- Using the period of suspension to have the student participate in a behaviour management, conflict resolution or respectful relationships program or activities (as appropriate to the behaviour for which they were suspended)

- Utilising a restorative practice approach and ensuring that the focus of an in-school suspension is that student making amends for their behaviour (eg. fixing something they have broken or doing something for any person they may have hurt or upset as a result of their behaviour).

The department provides information to assist parents when addressing concerns or making a complaint. Further information can be found at [www.education.vic.gov.au/about/contact/parentcomplaint.htm](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/contact/parentcomplaint.htm)

#### 4.3.2 Procedures prior to suspension

Before a student is suspended, with the exception of situations that require an immediate response, principals should ensure that a range of options, consistent with the staged response, have been considered (see Element 5, Appendix 2).

A student support group should be convened to inform the student and their parents/carers that a suspension is being considered. The aim of this student support group meeting is to identify any issues that are of concern to the school or the student and begin a process of effective communication between the school, the student and their parents/carers. The student support group should develop a range of strategies to support the student and the parents/carers in addressing the issue of concern, aimed at avoiding the suspension of the student. In exceptional circumstances a student support group meeting may occur outside the required timelines.

#### 4.3.3 Grounds for suspension

A principal may suspend a student if, while attending school or travelling to or from school or engaged in any school activity away from the school (including travel to or from that activity), the student:

- behaves in such a way as to threaten or constitute a danger to the health, safety or wellbeing of any person; or
- commits an act of significant violence against a person or causes significant damage to or destruction of property or is knowingly involved in the theft of property; or
- possesses, uses, or deliberately assists another person to use prohibited drugs or substances; or
- fails to comply with any reasonable and clearly communicated instruction of a principal, teacher or other staff member; or
- consistently behaves in a manner that interferes with the wellbeing, safety or educational opportunities of any other student; or
- consistently engages in behaviour that vilifies, defames, degrades or humiliates another person based on age; breastfeeding; gender identity; impairment; industrial activity; lawful sexual activity; marital status; parental status or status as a carer; physical features; political belief or activity; pregnancy; race; religious belief or activity; sexual orientation; personal association (whether as a relative or otherwise) with a person who is identified by reference to any of the above attributes.

#### 4.3.4 Procedures for suspension

In determining whether to suspend a student, the principal must ensure that this response is appropriate to:

- the behaviour for which the student is being suspended
- the educational needs of the student
- any disability or additional learning needs of the student
- the age of the student
- the residential and social circumstances of the student.

(See Element 5, Appendix 12 for the suspension procedures flow chart.)

When a principal determines that a suspension is justified they must:

- (a) convene a meeting of the student support group to:
  - i. explain to the student and their parents/carers the reasons for the suspension, the school days on which the suspension shall occur and where the suspension will occur (for example, in-school suspension)
  - ii. provide contact details for additional support services to the student and their parents/carers, as appropriate
  - iii. develop a Student Absence Learning Plan that outlines the school work to be undertaken during the period of suspension
  - iv. if the suspension is for five days, provide details of the post-suspension student support group meeting
- (b) ensure that:
  - i. a comprehensive range of strategies, including student support groups, have been considered and implemented by the school to meet the educational, social and emotional needs of the student
  - ii. despite these strategies, the student's inappropriate behaviour persists
- (c) provide the student, their parents/ carers and the school council president with a Notice of Suspension (see Element 5, Appendix 13) prior to the day on which the suspension commences which must include:
  - i. the summary of outcomes of previous actions that have been undertaken by the school to support the student (the staged response)

- ii. the reasons for the suspension
  - iii. the school days on which the suspension shall occur
  - iv. the details of the post-suspension student support group meeting, if the suspension is for five days
  - v. the Student Absence Learning Plan and Return to School Plan (as appropriate)
- (d) provide the student and their parents/carers with a copy of the information brochure *Procedures for Suspension* which outlines rights and responsibilities in terms of school exclusions.

#### 4.3.5 Procedures for immediate suspension

The principal may suspend a student immediately and prior to convening a student support group meeting if the student behaves in such a way that would provide the basis for a suspension ordinarily, and their behaviour is such that they are putting the health, safety and wellbeing of themselves, staff or other students at significant risk.

In such cases, principals must be aware that they have a duty of care to provide supervision of the student until they can be collected from school by a parent/ carer. If the parent/ carer is unable to collect their child, the student must stay on school premises and be adequately supervised by a member of staff until the end of the school day.

The principal must:

- i. give immediate verbal notification to the student and their parents/carers
- ii. schedule a student support group meeting (this meeting must be held within 48 hours of the student being suspended)
- iii. provide the student and their parents/ carers with a Notice of Suspension (see Element 5, Appendix 13) and

- a copy of the information brochure *Procedures for Suspension* which outlines rights and responsibilities in terms of school exclusions at the student support group meeting
- iv. develop a Student Absence Learning Plan (see Element 5, Appendix 6) and a Return to School Plan (see Element 5, Appendix 7) at the student support group meeting
- v. schedule a post-suspension student support group meeting if the suspension is for five days.

#### 4.3.6 Period of suspension

The maximum continuous period a student can be suspended at any one time is five school days.

A student cannot be suspended for more than 15 school days in any one school year without approval from the regional director. The school must provide appropriate and meaningful school work to the suspended student during the period of the suspension.

Any suspension must end at the end of the school term in which it was imposed and not continue into the following term. If a student is to be suspended for a period which is longer than the days left in a term the student may be suspended from attending school for the remainder of the term but must return to school on the first day of the following term.

The school principal is required to seek secondary consultation and/or direct intervention support from their regional office to address the behavioural concerns for a student who has been suspended for eight days in a school year or who reaches a total of four individual suspensions in a school year.

If a student reaches 15 days suspension, an expulsion is not the automatic consequence.

### 4.3.7 Post-suspension student support group meetings

If the suspension is for five days, the principal must convene a post-suspension student support group meeting on the day of the student's return to school.

The post-suspension student support group meeting should consider:

- (a) the Student Absence Learning Plan (see Element 5, Appendix 6) and develop a Return to School Plan (see Element 5, Appendix 7), including a review of school work undertaken while excluded from school
- (b) the strategies to be developed within and outside of the school to meet the educational, social and emotional needs of the student
- (c) the responsibilities of the student, their parents/carers, the school and any other professional participating in the meeting to support these strategies.

## 4.4 Expulsion

### 4.4.1 Authority for expulsion

Every Victorian student must be guaranteed a place in a school, registered training organisation or other alternative education setting. Schools should work in partnership at a network level to ensure that expelled students are guaranteed an educational placement at another school or registered training organisation or alternative education setting in their network. Regional offices can provide a structure to ensure that all schools in a network/region can work in partnership to provide a place for any student who requires one.

The principal is responsible for student expulsions. However, expulsion from a school is the most serious consequence

open to the principal. When expulsion is unavoidable, principals have a responsibility to demonstrate that expulsion is the only appropriate measure and that all other measures consistent with a staged response and the Student Engagement Policy have been implemented in good faith by the school without success.

Only the principal has the authority to expel a student from the school of which they are the principal. This responsibility cannot be delegated to any other person at the school.

### 4.4.2 Grounds for expulsion

A principal may expel a student if, while attending school or travelling to or from school or engaged in any school activity away from the school (including travel to or from that activity):

- (a) the student does anything for which they could be suspended (see Element 4, Section 4.3.3)
- (b) the student's behaviour is of such magnitude that, having regard to the need of the student to receive an education compared to the need to maintain the health, safety and wellbeing of other staff and students at the school and the need to maintain the effectiveness of the school's educational programs, an expulsion is the only available mechanism.

In determining whether to expel a student the principal must determine that expulsion of the student is appropriate to:

- (a) the behaviour for which the student is being expelled
- (b) the educational needs of the student
- (c) any disability or additional learning needs of the student
- (d) the age of the student
- (e) the residential and social circumstances of the student.

### 4.4.3 Procedures prior to expulsion

Prior to an expulsion, the principal must ensure that:

- (a) a comprehensive range of strategies, consistent with the staged response, to meet the educational, social and emotional needs of the student has been considered and implemented by the school
- (b) despite these strategies, the student's inappropriate behaviour persists.

The student and parents/carers must be informed that expulsion is being considered and must be given the opportunity to be heard. This should be undertaken through the student support group process.

The principal may implement an immediate suspension pending expulsion, prior to a student support group meeting being convened, only when the principal considers that the severity of the situation and the possibility of immediate physical threat to another person warrants such action (see Element 4, Section 4.3.5).

### 4.4.4 Procedures for expulsion

If a principal considers that expulsion is justified, they must notify the regional director that a student support group meeting is being convened to discuss the expulsion.

When a regional director has been informed that a principal is convening such a meeting, they must nominate a member of their staff to:

- (i) attend the meeting
- (ii) ensure that the appropriate education, training and employment options are considered for the student
- (iii) assist in implementing the course of action agreed to at the meeting.



Regional and school-based staff work in partnership when responding to students with behavioural difficulties or additional needs. Regions can provide a variety of supports to schools to ensure that individual student needs are met. These supports may include student support services officers, regional network leaders or regional student wellbeing managers. The role of the regional staff member in the student support group meeting is to enable the school to provide relevant support to the student and their parents/carers, and to facilitate referrals to and partnerships with external support organisations when more targeted interventions are required.

The principal must convene a student support group meeting to:

- (i) provide the student and their parents/carers with a Notice of Expulsion (see Element 5, Appendix 15) before the day on which the expulsion commences. The Notice of Expulsion must state the reason/s for the expulsion and state the date of the commencement of the expulsion
- (ii) provide a copy of the Expulsion Appeal proforma (see Element 5, Appendix 18) to the student and their parents/carers. The information brochure *Procedures for Expulsion*, which outlines details of the appeal process, should accompany the proforma
- (iii) ensure that the student and their parents/carers have the opportunity to be heard
- (iv) identify the future educational, training and/or employment options most suited to the student's needs.

Every reasonable step must be taken to ensure that all relevant professional staff who have been working with the student can attend the meeting with the

permission of the parents/carers and the student. In exceptional circumstances a student support group meeting may occur outside the required timelines.

If the student is in out-of-home care, the principal must ensure that the student's DHS case manager attends any student support group meeting, as well as any adult with whom the student normally or regularly resides.

For additional information, see <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/healthwellbeing/wellbeing/oohc/default.htm>

The school council president must be provided with a copy of the Notice of Expulsion (see Element 5, Appendix 15) and relevant attachments.

Following the student support group, if the principal determines that enrolment at another school and/or registered training organisation is the most appropriate option for that student, all members of the student support group must work to facilitate that enrolment.

It is the responsibility of the principal of the expelling school with support from the regional director (or nominee) to ensure that the student is enrolled at another school or registered training organisation if the student is of compulsory school age.

(See Element 5, Appendix 17 for the Expulsion Appeal flow chart.)

#### 4.4.5 Procedures following expulsion

A principal who has expelled a student must, within 24 hours of the commencement of the expulsion, forward a copy of the Notice of Expulsion (see Element 5, Appendix 15) to the regional director, with a written expulsion report (see Element 5, Appendix 16) which must contain:

- (a) a short statement of the history of the student's time at the school,

the grounds for the expulsion, any considerations in support of the expulsion including a comprehensive range of strategies employed to date and any representations made by the student or their parents/carers

- (b) a summary of the options considered by all the student support group meetings and why expulsion is considered necessary
- (c) details of the arrangements that have been made for the continuing education and/or employment of the student
- (d) recommendations on whether any further action either at the school, local, community, regional or system level is required, including strategies at the school level to prevent the repeat of similar circumstances.

The regional director (or nominee) should work with the school to ensure the student is supported and the outcomes of the Expulsion Report are achieved.

#### 4.4.6 Transition arrangements

If a school expels a student, the school must schedule a meeting with the destination school or registered training organisation of the expelled student.

The principal of the enrolling school may be called on by the regional director at any time over a period of 12 months to provide a formal report of the status of the student's transition.

It is the responsibility of the principal of the expelling school to ensure that information relevant to the needs of the student is passed to the enrolling school

or registered training organisation in accordance with the *Information Privacy Act 2000*.

#### 4.4.7 Appeal process

A principal's decision to expel a student can be appealed by the student or the student's parents/carers.

Grounds on which an expulsion can be appealed are:

- that the expulsion process was not followed by the school
- reasons for which the student was expelled are considered unfair
- other extenuating circumstances.

The principal must provide the student and parents/carers with an Expulsion Appeal proforma (see Element 5, Appendix 18) at the final student support group meeting.

The appeal must be lodged with the principal within 10 school days of receiving the Notice of Expulsion. The principal must then provide the regional director with a copy of the Expulsion Appeal within 24 hours.

The regional director (or nominee) must form an expulsion review panel and nominate panel members.

This panel must consist of:

- regional director's nominee
- school council president (or nominee)
- principal of another school.

A person who is both a departmental employee and a school council member is not eligible to participate in the expulsion review panel. No member of the expulsion review panel can have direct interest in the case.

#### 4.4.8 Expulsion review panel

The regional director's nominee is responsible for ensuring that they liaise with the panel members to schedule a time for the panel to meet. The person who filed the Expulsion Appeal (the student or their parents/carers) must be present at the expulsion review panel and have an opportunity to put their case to the panel.

The student or their parents/carers may be accompanied at the expulsion review panel meeting by another person who is not acting for a fee or reward. Legal practitioners are not permitted to attend this meeting on behalf of any member of the expulsion review panel, the student or their parents/carers.

The regional director's nominee is responsible for notifying the student and their parents/carers of the date, time and location of this panel meeting. The regional director (or nominee) must take every reasonable step to ensure that the scheduled date for the panel to sit is suitable for all members of the panel and that panel members are fully informed of their role.

#### 4.4.9 Role of the expulsion review panel

The role of the expulsion review panel is to:

- provide an opportunity for a student and parents/carers to be heard
- review the decision to expel a student.

The panel must make a written recommendation to the principal, who must act on the recommendation.



#### 4.4.10 Procedures for the expulsion review panel

The review must be held as early as possible within 10 school days of the regional director receiving the Expulsion Appeal. In exceptional circumstances this time limit may be extended for an additional five school days following approval from the Deputy Secretary, Office for Government School Education.

The attendance of qualified legal practitioners or other agents acting for fee or reward on behalf of any member of or participant in the appeal process is not permitted.

The principal must provide the following documents to the expulsion review panel:

- a copy of the Notice of Expulsion (see Element 5, Appendix 15)
- a copy of the Expulsion Report (see Element 5, Appendix 16)
- a copy of the Expulsion Appeal from the student or their parents/carers (see Element 5, Appendix 18).

The expelled student or the student's parents/carers must be given the opportunity to be heard and articulate their case.

The expulsion review panel must complete a report (see Element 5, Appendix 19), which must be forwarded to the regional director within 24 hours of the conclusion of the meeting. Copies of this report must be provided to the regional director, the person who submitted the Expulsion Appeal, the school council and the principal.

The decision of the panel must be unanimous.

If the panel is unable to reach a unanimous decision, the regional director must be notified within 24 hours of the conclusion of the meeting. The regional director must make a decision regarding the appeal based on the Expulsion Review Panel Report and all other documents before the expulsion review panel. The regional director must make this decision within 48 hours of being notified of the outcome of the expulsion review panel's deliberations.

The regional director (or nominee) must verbally notify the person who has brought the appeal of the outcome of the appeal within 24 hours of the decision being made. This verbal communication must be followed up by written communication notifying the student or their parents/carers of the panel's decision and must include a copy of the expulsion review panel report within five school days of the decision. This written communication must be provided to the person who submitted the Expulsion Appeal, the principal and the school council.

During the appeal process, the expelling school remains responsible for the student's educational provision and must provide the student with appropriate school work for the duration of the appeal. This must be monitored by the regional director's student support group nominee. The school should develop a Student Absence Learning Plan for the student to support the student's ongoing engagement with learning.

If the expulsion appeal panel overturns the principal's decision to expel the student, the student must be readmitted to school immediately. The principal must

work with the student, their parents/carers and the student's teacher/s to develop a Return to School Plan for the student. The principal must also ensure that the record of expulsion is removed from the student's permanent record. Once this has occurred, the principal must notify the student and their parents/carers of this in writing. This process should be monitored by the regional director.

#### 4.4.11 Further appeal processes

Parents/carers of an expelled student can appeal against the act of expulsion when it has been endorsed by the expulsion review panel.

The appeal is made to the Deputy Secretary, Office for Government School Education within 10 school days of being informed of the outcome of the expulsion review panel, on the grounds of the process followed by the expulsion review panel or the expulsion imposed by the principal. The Deputy Secretary must then appoint an independent officer to investigate the appeal in accordance with the grounds of the appeal.

The Deputy Secretary, after considering the advice of the investigation officer, may confirm the decision of the expulsion review panel, uphold the appeal or vary any of the decisions.

The right of appeal is vested in the parents/carers of the expelled student alone, except where a student is living independently from their parents/carers. In that case a student also has the right to appeal.



# Element 5: Support Materials

## Appendix 1 – Individual Learning Plan template

<b>Student name</b>		
<b>Year level</b>		<b>Date</b>
<p><b>Review of progress should be based on collection and analysis of data</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• formal classroom and broader assessment data such as appropriate observation notes from classroom teacher/s</li> <li>• feedback from the student</li> <li>• feedback from the parents/carers</li> </ul> <p><i>All decisions regarding student learning should be based on a range of data sources. Individual Learning Plans aim to personalise the teaching and learning program, support improvement in identified areas and should be monitored and revised regularly.</i></p>		
<p><b>Learning improvement goals –</b> Priority areas for improvement. Consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• engagement</li> <li>• attendance</li> <li>• behaviour</li> </ul>	<p><b>Learning outcomes</b> List relevant learning outcomes linked to the learning improvement goals. Consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• engagement</li> <li>• attendance</li> <li>• behaviour</li> </ul>	
<p><b>School and classroom strategies revised pedagogy</b></p> <p>Consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• revised pedagogy</li> <li>• classroom learning interventions</li> <li>• small group/individual support</li> <li>• behaviour expectations</li> </ul>	<p><b>Parents/carers – expectations/support</b></p> <p>Identify in partnership:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• expectations of parents/carers</li> <li>• level of support that can be provided by parents/carers</li> <li>• how the school can support parents/carers</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Processes for collection of data</b></p> <p>Identify:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• data collection methods</li> <li>• how progress will be measured</li> </ul> <p><b>Timeline for review and revision of plan</b></p> <p>Individual Learning Plans should be measured and modified regularly .</p>		
<p><b>Student’s comments</b></p>     <p><b>Classroom teacher’s comments</b></p>     <p><b>Parent’s/carer’s comments</b></p>     		

## Appendix 2 – Staged response checklist

<b>Stage 1: Prevention and early intervention – Creating a positive school culture</b>	
<b>Suggested strategies</b>	<b>School actions</b>
Define and teach school-wide expectations for all.	
Establish relevant school-wide prevention programs.	
Establish consistent school-wide processes to identify students at risk of disengagement from learning.	
Establish consistent school-wide processes and programs for early intervention.	

<b>Stage 2: Intervention: a targeted response for individual students</b>	
<b>Suggested strategies</b>	<b>School actions</b>
Establish an understanding of the life circumstances of the child/young person and how they feel.	
Establish data collection strategies.	
Develop the plan for improvement based on data and review regularly.	
Explicitly teach and/or build replacement behaviours.	
Determine strategies for the monitoring and measurement of student progress.	
Establish inclusive and consistent classroom strategies.	
Establish out-of-class support strategies.	
Establish a student support group.	

## Appendix 3 – School-wide positive behaviour support

Introducing, modelling and reinforcing positive social behaviour is an important component of a student’s educational experience. Teaching behavioural expectations and rewarding students for following them is a much more positive approach than waiting for misbehaviour to occur before responding.

The purpose of school-wide positive behaviour support (SW-PBS) is to establish a school climate in which appropriate behaviour is the norm for all students. It provides schools with a well-researched, evidence-based framework for improving the engagement of all students, including those with behavioural difficulties. It provides school communities with an effective, evidence-based approach to creating positive, safe and engaging school environments and focuses on three levels of implementation.

### **The continuum of SW-PBS**

Primary prevention – a universal provision of school and classroom-wide systems for all students, staff and school community members. The aim is to provide highly predictable school and classroom environments through the establishment of school-wide expectations of all members of the school community, and implementation of school-wide behaviour management strategies that focus on empowerment rather than control.

Secondary prevention – specialised group systems for students who demonstrate at-risk behaviour.

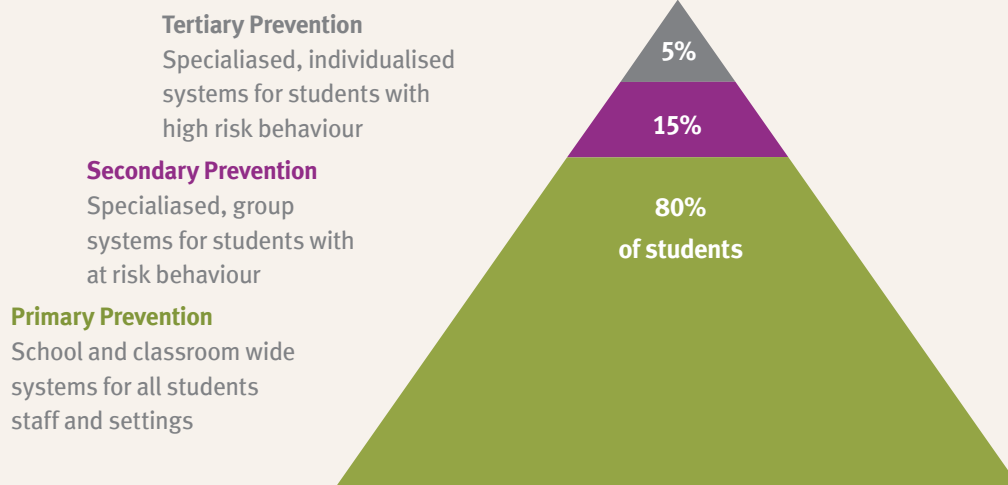
Tertiary prevention – specialised and individualised systems of support for individual students who have not had their needs adequately met through universal and group support.

This approach to behaviour management aims to create a positive, engaging and safe school environment, a culture of student competence and an open, responsive management system for school leaders, staff, students and parents/carers.

The principles that underpin SW-PBS align with the Department’s Effective Schools Model. SW-PBS focuses on promoting:

- professional leadership
- establishment of shared vision and goals
- high expectations of all learners
- accountability – evidence-based systems and interventions
- learning communities
- stimulating and secure learning environments.

## Continuum of School-wide Positive Behaviour Support



*Adapted from National Technical Assistance Center on Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS)*

SW-PBS provides educational leaders with a school improvement framework for ensuring that the learning environment of their school is focused on creating positive regard and engagement. The framework requires the establishment of school-wide expectations that are developed in collaboration, explicitly taught prior to errors occurring and reinforced with all school community members. SW-PBS focuses on data and inquiry to drive continuous improvement in the school's behaviour management processes and policies.

SW-PBS is currently being implemented in some schools in Victoria, Queensland, New South Wales and Tasmania.

More information can be obtained from the following websites:

- <http://www.pbis.org>
- <http://www.learningplace.com.au/deliver/content.asp?pid=24668>

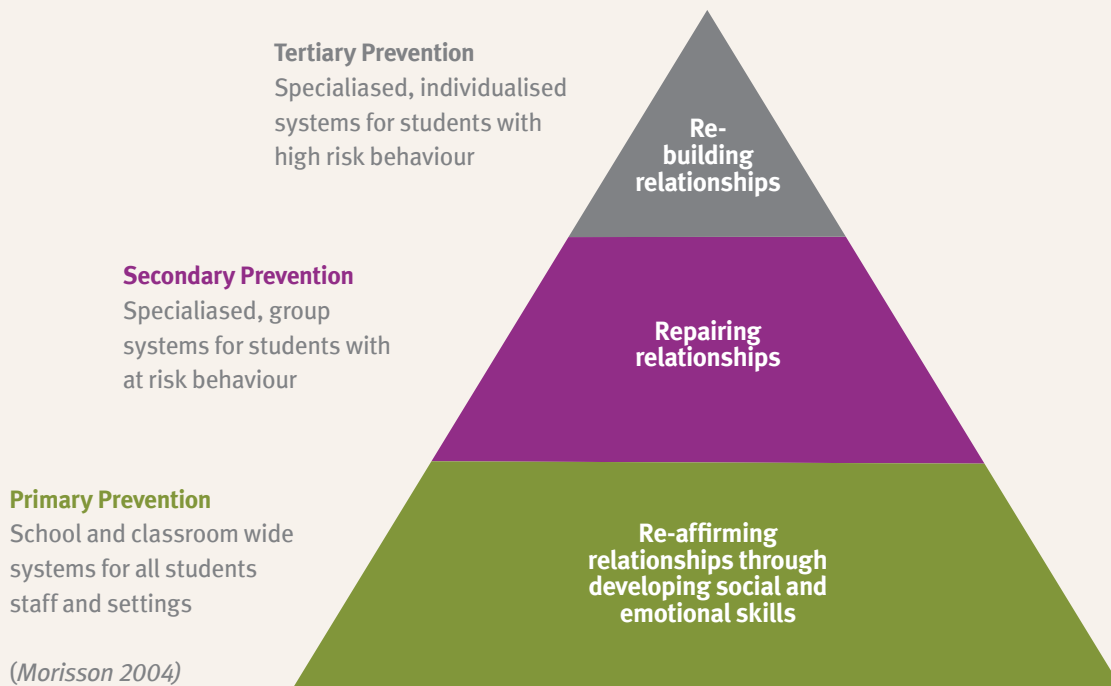
## Appendix 4 – Restorative practices

The interest in restorative justice principles and practices in Victorian schools has increased in recent years. The main reasons for the introduction of restorative practices are:

- to improve student behaviour management outcomes
- as one of a range of school improvement strategies, particularly in the social–emotional domain such as social skills and student engagement (DEET 2004).

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

### Hierarchy of Restorative Practices



#### Restorative Practices:

- are underpinned by student learning and facilitate an environment of safety, trust and connectedness (Bond et al. 2001, Fuller 1999)
- promote awareness of others, responsibility and empathy (Hopkins 2002)
- involve direct and voluntary participation of those affected by misconduct in its resolution (Braithwaite 2001b)
- promote relationship management rather than behaviour management (Cameron & Thorsborne 2001)
- separate the deed from the doer (Marshall et al. 2002)
- are systematic, not situational (Armstrong 2004)
- are concerned with establishing or re-establishing social equality in relationships; that is, relationships in which each person's rights to equal dignity, concern and respect are satisfied (Morrison 2002).

## Appendix 5 – Resources

### Victorian government departments

- Department of Education and Early Childhood Development – <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/default.htm>
- Student Wellbeing and Health Support Branch – <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/healthwellbeing/default.htm>
- Department of Human Services – <http://hnp.dhs.vic.gov.au/wps/portal>
- Department of Innovation, Industry and Regional Development – <http://www.diird.vic.gov.au/CORPLIVE/homepage/home.htm>
- Department of Planning and Community Development – <http://www.dvc.vic.gov.au/>
- Department of Justice – <http://www.justice.vic.gov.au/>
- Victoria Police – [http://www.police.vic.gov.au/content.asp?Document\\_ID=2](http://www.police.vic.gov.au/content.asp?Document_ID=2)
- Office for Youth – <http://www.youth.vic.gov.au/>
- Neighbourhood Renewal – <http://www.neighbourhoodrenewal.vic.gov.au/>

### Relevant government policies

- Blueprint for Education and Early Childhood Development – <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/directions/blueprint2008/default.htm>
- Curriculum Planning Guidelines – <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/studentlearning/curriculum/preptoyear10/guidelines/default.htm>
- Dardee Boorai: the Victorian Charter of Safety and Wellbeing for Aboriginal Children and Young People – <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/directions/aboriginal/charter/default.htm>
- DEECD Privacy Policy – [http://www.education.vic.gov.au/management/governance/referenceguide/management/6\\_28.htm](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/management/governance/referenceguide/management/6_28.htm)
- Disability Standards for Education – <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/healthwellbeing/wellbeing/disability/handbook/legislation.htm>
- Effective Schools Model – <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/directions/blueprint1/>
- Framework for Student Support Services – <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/healthwellbeing/wellbeing/policy.htm>
- Home Schooling – <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/aboutschool/enrolling/homeschool.htm>
- Interstate Student Data Transfer Note – <http://www.mceetya.edu.au/transfernote>
- It's Not OK to Be Away – <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/healthwellbeing/wellbeing/attendance/initiative.htm>
- Managed Individual Pathways – <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/sensecyouth/careertrans/mips/default.htm>
- Parent Complaints – <http://eduhs01:5009/about/contact/parentcomplaint.htm>
- Partnering Agreement: School Attendance and Engagement of Children and Young People in Out of Home Care – <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/healthwellbeing/wellbeing/oohc/default.htm>
- Primary and Secondary School Nurse Program – <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/healthwellbeing/health/schoolnursing/default.htm>
- Principles of Learning and Teaching – <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/studentlearning/teachingprinciples/>
- Safe Schools are Effective Schools – <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/healthwellbeing/safety/bullying/default.htm>
- School Accountability and Improvement Framework – <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/management/schoolimprovement/default.htm>
- Student Mapping Tool – <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/sensecyouth/careertrans/mips/sar/>
- Transferring Information between Victorian Government Schools – <https://www.eduweb.vic.gov.au/privacy/resources.htm>
- Victorian Essential Learning Standards – <http://vels.vcaa.vic.edu.au/>
- Victorian Teaching Profession Code of Conduct – [http://www.vit.vic.edu.au/content.asp?Document\\_ID=25](http://www.vit.vic.edu.au/content.asp?Document_ID=25)
- Wannik Education Strategy for Koori Students – <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/directions/aboriginal/wannik/default.htm>
- Youth Guarantee – <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/news/newsalerts/youthguarantee.htm>



### Post-compulsory pathways

- Structured Workplace Learning – <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/sensecyouth/careertrans/worklearn/structuredlearning.htm>
- Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning – <http://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/vcal/>
- Vocational Education and Training – <http://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/vet/>
- Work Experience – <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/sensecyouth/careertrans/worklearn/workexperience.htm>

### Department of Education and Early Childhood Development Regional Offices

- Barwon South Western Region – <http://www.bsw.vic.edu.au>
- Eastern Metropolitan Region – <http://www.emr.vic.edu.au>
- Gippsland Region – <http://www.gippsland.vic.edu.au>
- Grampians Region – <http://www.grampians.vic.edu.au>
- Hume Region – <http://www.gner.vic.edu.au>
- Loddon Mallee Region – <http://www.lcmdoe.vic.edu.au>
- Northern Metropolitan Region – <http://www.nmr.vic.edu.au>
- Southern Metropolitan Region – <http://www.smr.vic.edu.au>
- Western Metropolitan Region – <http://www.wmr.vic.edu.au>

### Legislation

- *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006* – [http://www.austlii.edu.au/au/legis/vic/consol\\_act/cohrra2006433/](http://www.austlii.edu.au/au/legis/vic/consol_act/cohrra2006433/)
- *Education and Training Reform Act 2006* – <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/directions/reviewleg.htm>
- *Equal Opportunity Act 1995* – [http://www.austlii.edu.au/au/legis/vic/consol\\_act/eoa1995250/](http://www.austlii.edu.au/au/legis/vic/consol_act/eoa1995250/)
- *Information Privacy Act 2000* – [http://www.austlii.edu.au/au/legis/vic/consol\\_act/ipa2000231/](http://www.austlii.edu.au/au/legis/vic/consol_act/ipa2000231/)

### Other information and resources

- Australian Health Promoting Schools Association – <http://www.ahpsa.org.au>
- Calmer Classrooms – [http://www.ocsc.vic.gov.au/downloads/calmer\\_classrooms.pdf](http://www.ocsc.vic.gov.au/downloads/calmer_classrooms.pdf)
- Great Expectations: Supporting Children and Young People in Out-of-Home Care to Achieve at School – [http://www.ocsc.vic.gov.au/downloads/great\\_expectations.pdf](http://www.ocsc.vic.gov.au/downloads/great_expectations.pdf)
- National Safe Schools Framework – [http://www.dest.gov.au/sectors/school\\_education/publications\\_resources/profiles/national\\_safe\\_schools\\_framework.htm](http://www.dest.gov.au/sectors/school_education/publications_resources/profiles/national_safe_schools_framework.htm)
- Personalising Education : From Research to Policy and Practice – <http://www.eduweb.vic.gov.au/edulibrary/public/publ/research/nws/ResearcheLert-issue-12-2007.pdf>
- Positive Behaviour Support – <http://www.pbis.org/main.htm>
- Retention and Reintegration: Recommendations and Model of Practice for Schools/Family Support Resource – <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/studentlearning/programs/drugeducation/tchlearnteach.htm>
- Restorative practices – <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/healthwellbeing/safety/bullying/schoolstrategy.htm#2>
- Schools Retention ... what does it take?: A Guide to Keeping Young People under 15 Connected to School – <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/studentlearning/programs/drugeducation/tchlearnteach.htm>
- Victorian Government Schools Reference Guide – <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/management/governance/referenceguide/default.htm>
- Youth Central – <http://www.youthcentral.vic.gov.au>

## Appendix 6 – Student Absence Learning Plan template

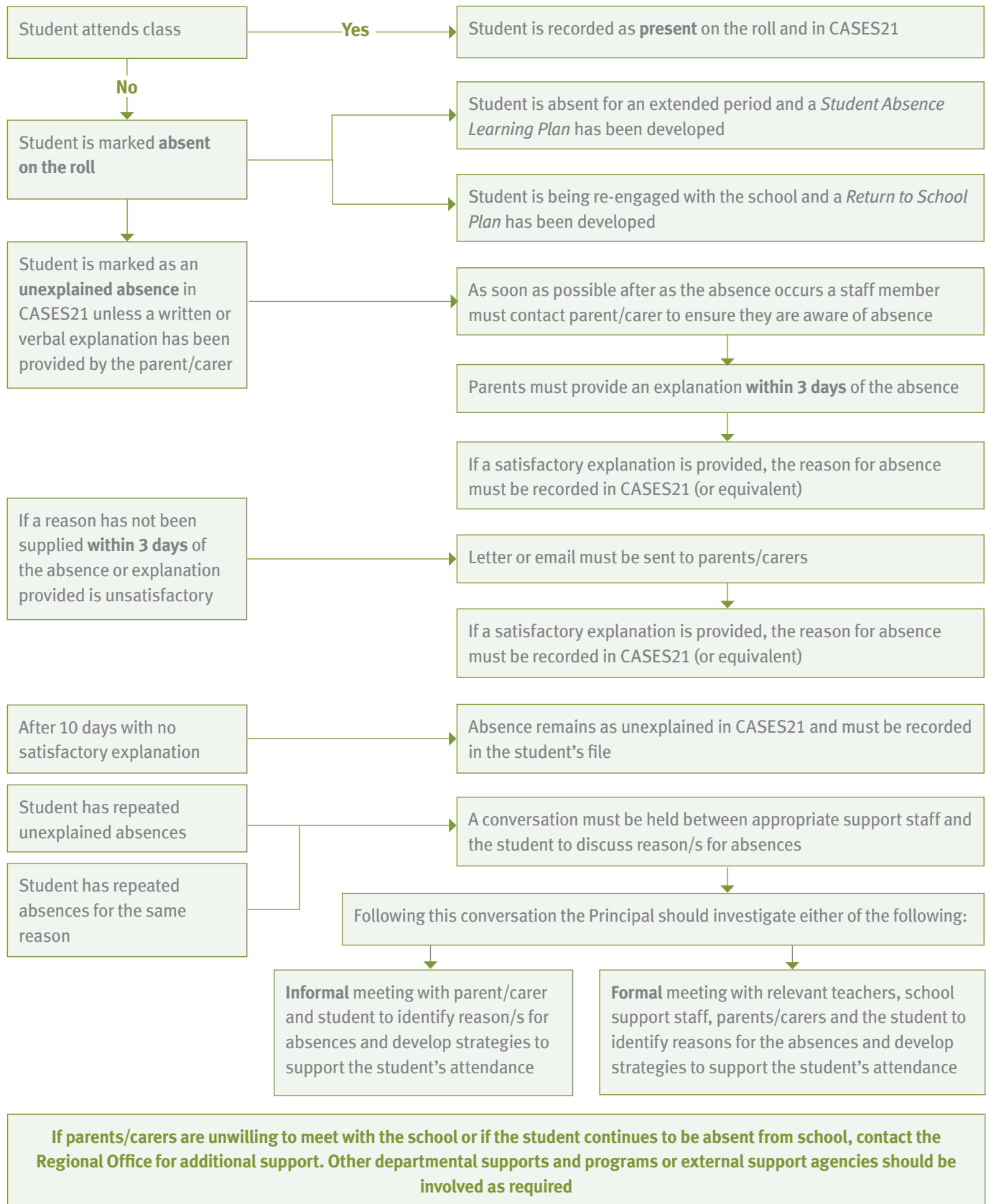
Students who are taking extended absences from school must have a Student Absence Learning Plan to support the education of students who are absent from school for an extended period. It may also be useful to develop a Return to School Plan for students who have been absent for an extended period.

<b>Student name</b>		
<b>Year level</b>		<b>Date</b>
<b>Reason for absence:</b>		
<b>Date of last day of school:</b>		<b>Date of return to school:</b>
<b>Description of the educational program:</b>		
Teachers/year-level coordinators should include elements of the learning program the student will be missing while away. The learning program should enable the student to more easily re-engage in class activities when they return.		
<b>Activities for the student to undertake while away from school:</b>		
For example, if a student is travelling, what research can they undertake, or what presentations can be prepared?		
<b>Outcomes for the student to achieve:</b>		
<b>Resources that the student may find useful:</b>		
<b>Agreed role of parents/carers in supporting the absence learning program:</b>		
<b>Contact details for the student to stay in touch:</b>		
<b>School contact person:</b>		<b>School phone number:</b>
<b>Signature of parent/carer:</b>		<b>Signature of principal:</b>

## Appendix 7 – Attendance Improvement Plan or Return to School Plan template

<b>Student name</b>	<b>Date</b>
<b>Year level</b>	
<b>The work that I have missed and need to complete:</b>	
<b>Insert copy of students' timetable here.</b>	
<b>Goals to improve my attendance so that I achieve a ____% attendance rate:</b>	
1.	
2.	
3.	
<b>People I will go to when I need help:</b>	
<b>Their locations:</b>	
<b>If I am absent for any reason my parent/carer will contact the school on the first day of my absence</b>	
<b>School phone:</b>	
<b>If the school does not receive a message then my teacher will contact my home to see what has happened.</b>	
<b>Parent/carer phone:</b>	
<b>School Term Dates</b>	
<b>Student Free Days</b>	
<b>School will be closed to students on:</b>	

## Appendix 8 - Process map for following up absences



## Appendix 9 School attendance checklist

	Yes	No	Action
Rolls are completed accurately.			
There is effective monitoring of students, including period-by-period tracking where appropriate.			
Data is entered daily on electronic system.			
Absence codes are used accurately and consistently.			
Proper transfer and enrolment procedures are utilised.			
Data is maintained accurately.			
Attendance data is analysed regularly for early identification of non-attending students.			
Attendance is made a clear priority in the School Strategic Plan and the Annual Implementation Plan.			
Clear and achievable improvement strategies and targets are established.			
Data is analysed regularly to inform evaluation and planning of improvement strategies.			
Attendance expectations are clearly stated in the Student Engagement Policy.			
Staff recognise their role and responsibility in promoting and supporting good attendance.			
Parents/carers and students are regularly informed about school and community attendance expectations.			
Parents/carers and the school work in partnership to ensure immediate and apparent follow-up to student absence.			
Attendance meetings are held with parents/carers and students and involve identification of improvement strategies.			
Late arrivals are dealt with consistently.			
Parents/carers notify the school about forthcoming extended absence.			
Inclusive practices are utilised, including the use of interpreters and provision of relevant documents translated into community languages.			
Student support groups are established to enable multi-disciplinary support of individual students and their families.			
Appropriate protocols and procedures are established for outside referrals of students and their families.			
There is positive support for students returning from absence, including the use of Return to School Plans.			

## Appendix 10 – Using CASES21 to record types of absences

The student absence module in CASES21 enables schools to categorise different reasons for absence. Schools may wish to use an abbreviated list of the CASES21 codes set out below. Relevant school staff should have a discussion with the school community to develop an agreed list of absence codes with shared/common understandings of definitions of the codes to be used. Consistent use of CASES21 absence codes helps schools to identify emerging absence issues and deliver targeted early intervention strategies.

Notes:

**Counted ^^** shows whether this type of absence will be included as student absence for accountability and benchmarking purposes.

**Parent/carer approval \*\*** means parent/carer provided note, had phone contact or face-to-face conversation with school approving absence and school has retained documentary evidence of approval.

Code	Description	Counted	Further details of types of absence included
<b>Late arrival/early departure</b>			
111	Late arrival at school	No	Arrived late with parent/carer approval.**
112	Early departure from school	No	Departed early with parent/carer approval.**
113	Late arrival unexplained	No	Arrived late without parent/carer approval.**
114	Early departure unexplained	No	Departed early without parent/carer approval.**
116	Late arrival to class	No	Late arrival to class with parent/carer approval.**
117	Early leaver from class	No	Departed early from class with parent/carer approval.**
118	Late to class unexplained	No	Late arrival to class without parent/carer approval.**
<b>Educational</b>			
600	Educational	No	Students attending an educational activity organised by the school. Includes alternate setting, language centre, social adjustment centre, Year 12 students attending classes at university, music class, Brain Gym, attending a poetry competition, part home schooling and part attendance at school, external examinations, driver education school has organised.
601	Group activity	No	
602	Community service	No	Includes Year 9 class doing Community Service elective.
603	Duty student	No	Student provides assistance in school somewhere, for example in office. Includes ground monitors.
604	Excursion	No	Excursion that is curriculum-related.
605	Special event	No	Includes special school students attending a Variety Club event.
606	Camp	No	
607	Other educational activity	No	Includes orientation day (for example, Year 6 students attending secondary school), exchange program/student, transition days.
608	TAFE	No	Includes attendance at TAFE, VET classes at TAFE, VET work placements, school-based apprenticeships, traineeships.
609	Work experience	No	

Code	Description	Counted	Further details of types of absence included
<b>Educational</b>			
610	School production	No	Includes school play, school choir.
611	Sports	No	Includes sporting activity out of school, sports day, training for sports day.
612	Study leave	No	Includes VCE students given study leave, spare periods, no timetabled classes and student either stays on school site or leaves, no classes and students are supposed to study, private study, study pass, study periods.
802	Exempt	No	Includes end of year and some students (for example, Years 11 and 12) permitted to leave school early, Prep attendance not required/ Prep transition start, student is part-time and therefore not required to be there some of the time (for example, home schooling, part-time at a special school and part-time at a regular school, dual enrolment, member of school community dies and students stay at home or attend funeral as they wish, transition to adult setting).
<b>School decision</b>			
901	Industrial action	No	
902	Facility damage	No	Includes power going off for a day and students told to stay home.
903	Weather	No	Extreme weather conditions.
904	Staff meeting	No	Includes curriculum day, planning day, student-free day, report writing day, parent–teacher interviews, Prep interviewing/testing day.
<b>Health-related</b>			
200	Medical	Yes	Parent/carer approved** and gave this health-related reason.
201	Illness	Yes	Parent/carer approved** and gave this health-related reason.
202	Accident	Yes	Parent/carer approved** and gave this health-related reason. Includes injury at school.
203	Counselling	Yes	Student receiving counselling externally.
204	Sick bay	No	Student in sick bay.
205	Medical appointment	Yes	Parent/carer approved** and gave this health-related reason. Includes speech pathologist, optometrist.
206	Hospitalised	Yes	Parent/carer approved** and gave this health-related reason
207	Quarantine	Yes	Parent/carer approved** and gave this health-related reason. Includes school sores, head lice, chicken pox.
209	Dentist	Yes	Parent/carer approved** and gave this health-related reason. Includes orthodontist .

Code	Description	Counted	Further details of types of absence included
<b>Health-related</b>			
210	Medical/welfare	Yes	Includes welfare activities, custody problem, DHS intervention, foster care, court attendance. Note: possible overlap with 200 Medical and 203 Counselling.
211	Bereavement	Yes	Includes funeral, death in family, absence due to a death.
<b>Unapproved absence</b>			
208	Refusal	Yes	Student refuses to attend and parents know and approve.
300	Truancy	Yes	Parents/carers know about absence but do not approve, parents/carers do not know about absence.
500	Unexplained	Yes	No parent/carer approval** and no reason from parents/carers or student.
<b>Discipline</b>			
400	Suspension – in-school/ internal	No	Suspension that is internal only (usually student is sent out of class but is still at school).
401	Suspension – external	Yes	Suspended and not permitted to attend school. Includes expulsion in progress.
900	School choice	Yes	Asked to stay home for reasons other than suspension or illness and student is responsible as opposed to school (for example, out of uniform, sent home for disciplinary reasons but not suspended, problem with a teacher and parents/carers can not visit school for a couple of days).
<b>Exited/transferred</b>			
701	Exit	No	Student is exiting, but until paper work is processed any absences recorded under Exit.
702	Transferred	No	Student is transferring to another school, but until paper work is processed any absence is recorded under Transferred. Also student is transferring into school.
<b>Parental choice</b>			
800	Parent choice	Yes	Includes Parent/carer approved** but gave no reason, parent approved** and gave a reason but the reason is not health-related or extended family holiday or religious/cultural observance. Includes visiting relatives, going shopping, missed school bus, family matters, family member ill. Some schools do not tell the absence officer reason for absence so must go under this category.
804	Extended family holidays	Yes	Parent/carer approved** and gave this reason. Includes student is taken out of school to go on a family holiday.
805	Religious/Cultural observance	Yes	Parent/carer approved** and gave this reason. Includes student kept away from school for a religious or cultural observance reason.



## Appendix 11 – CASES21 attendance reports

Report	No.	Use
Excessive consecutive absences ending today	ST21307	This view-only report lists student IDs, names, home groups, year levels and parental telephone contact details for students who have been absent without explanation for three or more consecutive days (including the current day).
Individual students with Youth Allowance	ST21313	This report provides details of students receiving Youth Allowance who have been absent during a specified date range. It lists the names of absent students in student ID order, home group and the number of absent days recorded.
Absence report type by whole school	ST21314	This report lists the names and student IDs of all students in the school who were absent during a specified date range, and includes the dates of the absence, absence types and home groups.
Incomplete attendance recording for home groups	ST21315	This report lists those home groups that have not completed or submitted attendance data. The report can be refined by home group.
Student absence summary by home group	ST21316	This view-only format provides a summary of student absences for each home group, including the number of unapproved and approved absences for each student.
Student absence summary by year level	ST21317	This report provides a summary of the number of approved, non-approved and curriculum-related absences of students in each year level.
Half-day attendance under given percentage	ST21318	This report lists, in home group order, those students with attendance under a specified percentage (usually 80 per cent). It includes student IDs and names, as well as number of days absent, days marked and attendance rates. This report is particularly useful for the VCE year levels, as VCE requires an attendance level of 80% or above.
Half day attendance by percentage	ST21323	This report outlines the attendance rates of students in each home group. It lists student IDs and names, as well as the number of days absent, days marked and attendance rates. This report shows all attendance percentages and also flags those students who have an at-risk status.
Group membership list with attendance grid	SG21011	This view-only format details the attendance rates and details of students in a particular group for a specified month.
View absence history by student	SXAB11501	This view-only format displays the absence history for specific students.
Absence history report by student	SXAB21501	This report displays absence histories for individual students, showing absence details recorded during a specified date range.
Students by home group (condensed)	ST21319	This report can be printed and used to record a daily summary of the number of students absent from each home group.

Report	No.	Use
Blank attendance roll by home group	ST21066	This report can be printed and used as a home group attendance roll for a single month. The report lists all student IDs and names in the home group and provides blank boxes for marking absences that correspond to the weekdays in each month.
Monthly attendance roll by home group	ST21067	This report can be used to generate a completed attendance roll for a single month. It displays processed attendance records for the home groups specified. The report lists student IDs, names and daily attendance records of students in each home group, and provides summary totals of attendance and absences for each student and each day.
Half-day absence report	ST21304	This view-only format lists the students in each home group who have been absent on a particular day. The report also lists student IDs and names, AM and PM absence types and any comments recorded for the absences.
Condensed half-day absences by year level or home group	ST21305 ST21306	These reports provide a condensed list of the students in each year level or home group who were absent on a particular day. They also list the AM and PM absence types.
Student absence details report	ST21312	This view-only format lists student absence details. The report includes student IDs and names, AM and PM absence types and any comments recorded for the absences.
Absence report type by whole school	ST21314	This view-only format lists student IDs and names, absence types and home groups of all students in the school absent during a specified date range. A summary of student absences appears below the main report.
Incomplete attendance recording for home groups	ST21315	This view-only format lists those home groups with incomplete attendance records. It lists the dates that attendance records have not been processed.
Student absentee letter	ST21320	This format is used to generate letters to parents/carers of students who have been late or absent without explanation for a number of days. The letter includes space for parents/carers to provide explanations about each absence.
Youth allowance half-day attendance summary	ST21321	This view-only format details the attendance rates of students at the school who receive Youth Allowance. It includes student IDs and names, as well as the number of unapproved days absent, days marked and unapproved rate.
Aboriginal half-day attendance summary	ST21322	This view-only format provides details of the attendance rates of Aboriginal students at the school. It includes student IDs and names, number of days absent, days marked and attendance rates.

Report	No.	Use
Unapproved absence summary	SXAB21330	This view-only format provides a summary of the school's unapproved absence rates. It includes the year level, current home group, student IDs and names, unapproved absence codes, number of days marked absent by that code and each student's attendance rate percentage.
Unapproved absence details	SXAB21331	This view-only format provides a detailed report on the school's unapproved absence rates. It includes the year level, current home group, student IDs and names, family phone number, date, AM and PM codes, and descriptions for unapproved absences.

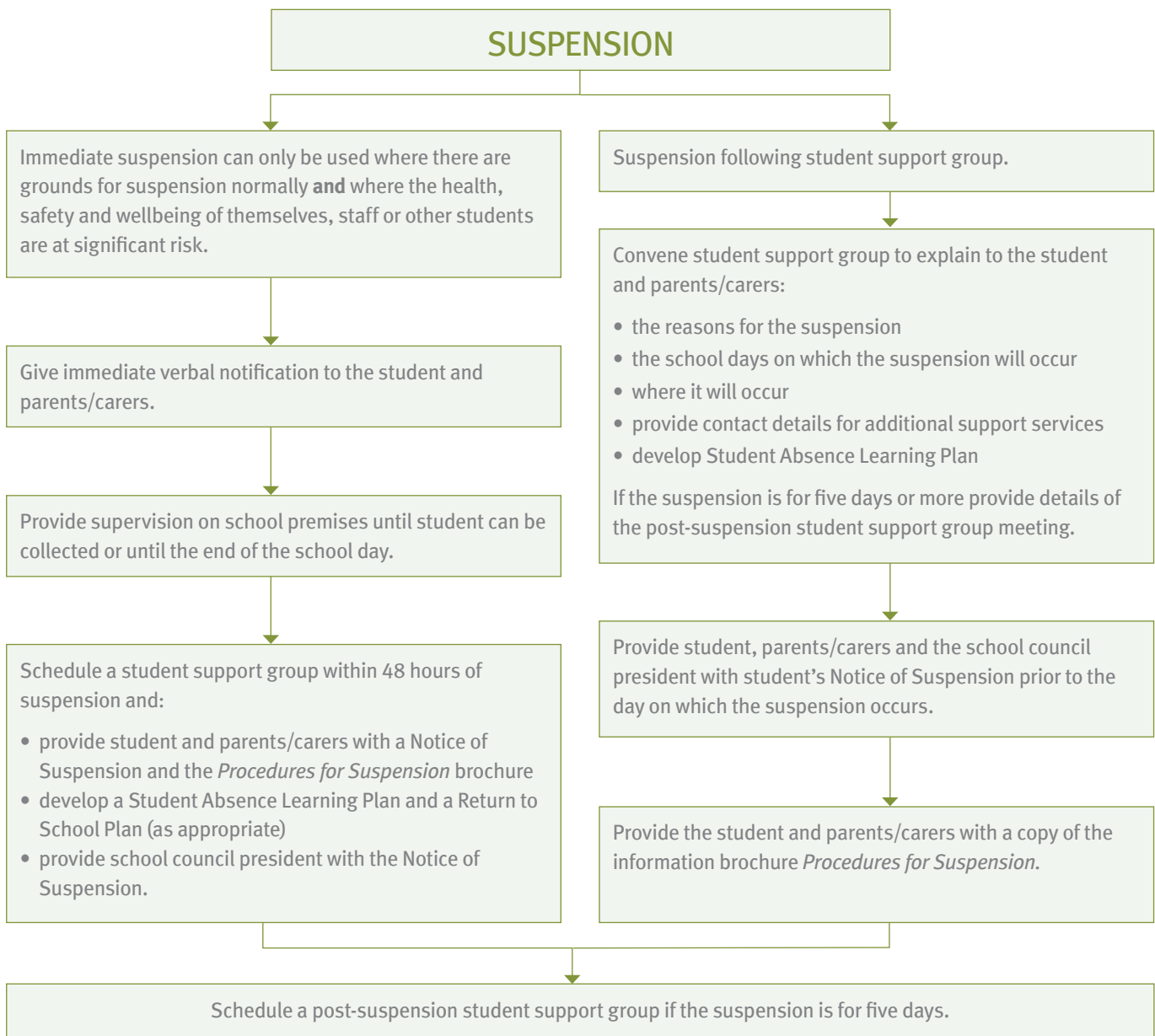
## Appendix 12 – Suspension process flow chart

NOTE: In determining whether to suspend a student the principal must ensure that suspension is appropriate to the student's:

- behaviour for which the student is being suspended
- educational needs
- disability or additional learning needs
- age
- residential and social circumstances.

### Suspension being considered

- student support group convened to inform the student and their parents/carers that a suspension is being considered
- student support group should develop a range of strategies to support the student and parents/carers to address the area of concern and avoid suspension where possible.



## Appendix 13 – Notice of suspension proforma

<b>School information</b>	
School name	
School number	School phone number
Contact person name and number	

<b>Student contact information</b>	
Name	Year level
Address	
	Phone
Email	

<b>Parent/carer details</b>	
Name	Relationship to student
Address	
	Phone
Email	

<b>Suspension details</b>			
Current suspension			
Previous suspension/s (if any) in this school year	From	to	(inclusive)
Previous suspension/s (if any) in previous school years	From	to	(inclusive)

Secondary consultation and/or direct intervention support must be sought from the regional office to address the behavioural concerns for a student who has been suspended for eight days in a school year or who reaches a total of four individual suspensions in a school year

### Reason for suspension

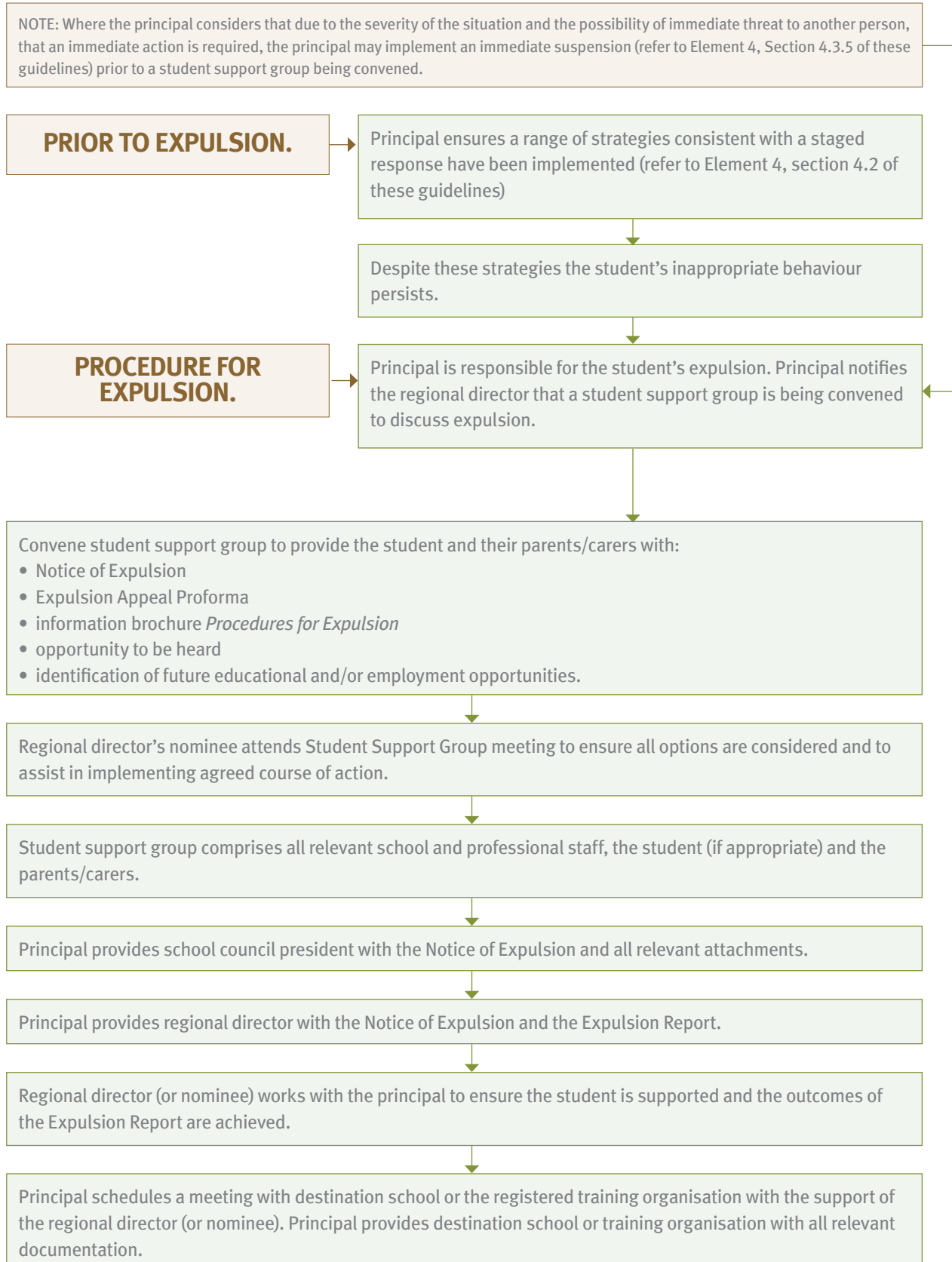
Under Ministerial Order 184, this student was suspended for (please circle):

- threatening or endangering the health, safety or wellbeing of others
- committing an act of significant violence against a person or property or being knowingly involved in the theft of property
- possessing, using or assisting another person to use prohibited drugs or substances
- failing to comply with a reasonable and clearly communicated instruction of a principal, teacher or other staff member
- consistently behaving in a manner that interferes with the wellbeing, safety or educational opportunities of any other student
- consistently engaging in behaviour that vilifies, defames, degrades or humiliates another person

<b>Explanation of the circumstances leading to suspension</b>
<b>Outcomes of the student support groups</b>
Date/s of student support groups
Attendees
Strategies discussed
Supports (school based or external) provided to the student
Date of post-suspension student support group (only required if suspension is for five school days)
Additional information (if required)

<p><b>Checklist:</b></p> <p>Each of these boxes must be ticked and the Notice of Suspension endorsed by the principal before the student can be suspended. Refer to Element 4 of Effective Schools are Engaging Schools: Student Engagement Policy Guidelines for more information.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student absence learning plan agreed upon at student support group is attached (for documentation purposes) and has been provided to the student and their parents/carers.</li> <li>• Student absence learning plan agreed upon at students support group is attached (for documentation purposes) and has been provided to the student and their parents/carer.</li> <li>• All other relevant information is attached.</li> <li>• A copy of the Notice of Suspension has been provided to the student, their parents/carers and the school council president.</li> <li>• The student and their parents/carers have been provided with a copy of the information brochure <i>Procedures for Suspension</i>.</li> </ul> <p><b>Principal's name:</b> _____ <b>Principal's signature</b> _____</p> <p><b>Date:</b> _____</p>
--

## Appendix 14 – Expulsion process flow chart



## Appendix 15 – Notice of Expulsion proforma

<b>School information</b>	
School name	
School number	School phone number
Contact person name and number	

<b>Student contact information</b>	
Name	Year level
Address	
	Phone
Email	

<b>Parent/carer details</b>	
Name	Relationship to student
Address	
	Phone
Email	

<b>Expulsion details</b>
Commencement date of expulsion
<p><b>Reason for suspension</b></p> <p>Under Ministerial Order 184, this student was expelled for (please circle):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• threatening or endangering the health, safety or wellbeing of others</li> <li>• committing an act of significant violence against a person or property or being knowingly involved in the theft of property</li> <li>• possessing, using or assisting another person to use prohibited drugs or substances</li> <li>• failing to comply with a reasonable and clearly communicated instruction of a principal, teacher or other staff member</li> <li>• consistently behaving in a manner that interferes with the wellbeing, safety or educational opportunities of any other student</li> <li>• consistently engaging in behaviour that vilifies, defames, degrades or humiliates another person</li> </ul>
<b>Explanation of the circumstances leading to expulsion</b>



<b>Outcomes of the student support groups</b>
Date/s of student support groups for this year (attach minutes of all previous meetings)
Date of final student support group
Attendees
Transition arrangements, including details of receiving school, registered training organisation or employer
Details of any transition supports provided
Additional information (if required)

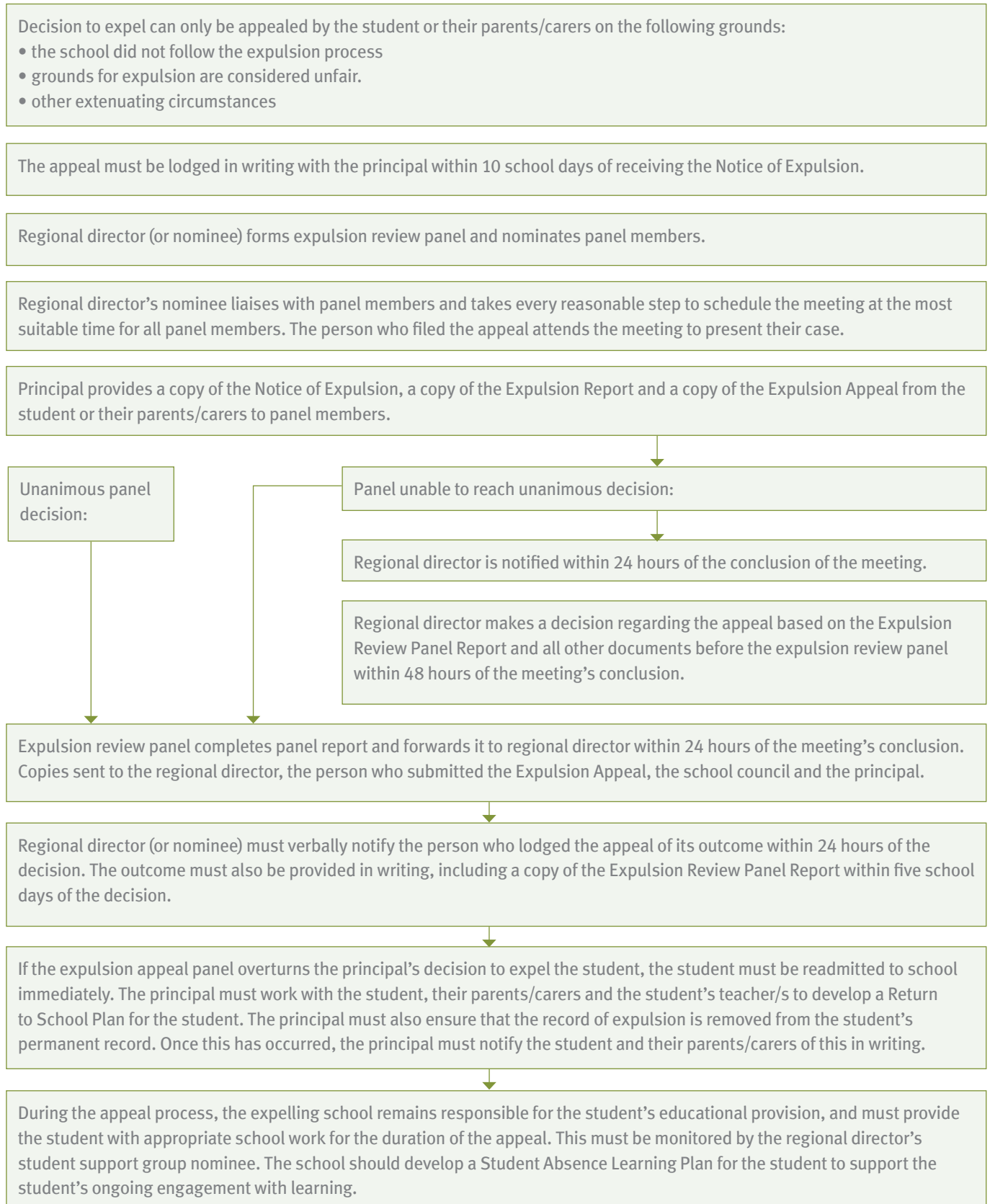
<p><b>Checklist:</b></p> <p>Each of these boxes must be ticked and the Notice of Expulsion endorsed by the principal before the student can be expelled. Refer to Element 4 of Effective Schools are Engaging Schools for more information.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All relevant information is attached.</li> <li>• A copy of the Notice of Expulsion has been provided to the student, their parents/carers and the school council president.</li> <li>• The student and their parents/carers have been provided with a copy of the information brochure <i>Procedures for Expulsion</i>.</li> </ul> <p><b>Principal's name:</b> _____ <b>Principal's signature</b> _____</p> <p><b>Date:</b> _____</p>
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## Appendix 16 – Expulsion Report proforma

This expulsion report must be completed by the principal and forwarded, with a copy of the Notice of Expulsion, to the regional director within 24 hours of the commencement of the expulsion.

<b>School information</b>	
School name	
School number	
<b>Student details</b>	
Name	
Year level	
<b>Expulsion details</b>	
Commencement date of expulsion	
<b>Background information</b>	
Please provide a brief history of the student's time at school	
What, if any, representations have been made by the parents/carers?	
Summary of prior support or intervention strategies implemented	
Further considerations in support of expulsion	
<b>Further action</b>	
Outline transition arrangement and any further action required	
Outline changes or strategies made to the school or classroom environment to prevent a repeat of similar circumstances	
<b>Principal's name:</b> <b>Date:</b>	<b>Principal's signature</b>

## Appendix 17 – Expulsion appeal process flow chart



## Appendix 18 – Expulsion Appeal proforma

This Expulsion Appeal proforma should be filled out by students or parents/carers wishing to appeal an expulsion from a Victorian government school. A copy of this expulsion appeal must be provided to the principal within 10 days of the start of the expulsion via mail, fax or email. It is advisable that you contact the school to confirm they received the expulsion appeal and you should keep a copy of the expulsion appeal for your records.

If you need assistance in filling out this expulsion appeal you can seek help from a friend or family member. For additional support you may wish to contact Parents Victoria on 9380 2158 or 1800 032 023 (rural callers only) or visit their website at [www.parentsvictoria.asn.au](http://www.parentsvictoria.asn.au)

<b>School information</b>	
Primary school name (must be completed even if student is at secondary school)	
Secondary school name	
Current school principal name	
<b>Student details</b>	
Name	
Year level	Age
<b>Expulsion details</b>	
Start date of expulsion	
<b>Background information</b>	
Please provide a brief history of the student's time at school	
Has more than one student support group been held for the student? Yes / No (please circle one)	
Have you participated in more than one student support group in the past year? Yes / No (please circle one)	
What was the outcome of the final student support group (for example student will be enrolled in another school, student will begin full time employment etc)	
Has the school provided you with a written notice of expulsion? Yes / No (please circle one)	
Has the school provided you with a copy of the information brochure Procedures for Expulsion? Yes / No (please circle one)	

<b>Reason for expulsion</b>	
Please provide a brief explanation of the reason for expulsion	
<b>Reason for appeal</b>	
Please tick the most appropriate box and provide additional details if required	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Process (as outlined in the information brochure Procedures for Expulsion) was not followed by the school</li> <li>• Grounds on which the student was expelled were unfair</li> <li>• Other (please provide detailed explanation below).</li> </ul>
<b>Comments</b>	
This form was completed by:	
<b>Name:</b>	
<b>Relationship to student:</b>	
<b>Signature</b>	<b>Date:</b>

## Appendix 19 – Expulsion review panel report

This report must be completed, signed by all three panel members, and forwarded to the regional director within 24 hours of the conclusion of the meeting. Copies of the notice of expulsion, the expulsion report and the expulsion appeal must be attached to this report..

<b>Student details</b>	
Name	
Year Level	
<b>School details</b>	
School	
Principal	
Date of expulsion	
<b>Panel details</b>	
Panel member 1 (name and position)	
Panel member 2 (name and position)	
Panel member 3 (name and position)	
<b>Background information</b>	
Grounds for expulsion	
Grounds for appeal	
Range of strategies followed by the school, consistent with a staged response, to meet the social, emotional and educational needs of the student	

Were all appropriate procedures followed by the school?      Yes / No	
Other considerations (if appropriate)	
<b>Panel recommendation</b>	
Was the panel decision unanimous    Yes / No	
Is the expulsion upheld      Yes / No	
If not, please provide details	
<b>Panel member 1</b>	
<b>Signature:</b>	<b>Date:</b>
<b>Panel member 2</b>	
<b>Signature:</b>	<b>Date:</b>
<b>Panel member 3</b>	
<b>Signature:</b>	<b>Date:</b>

## References

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Elliot, A. 2004, *Alternatives to School Suspension*, Australian Council for Educational Research eNews,  
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