



# STUDENT ENGAGEMENT POLICY

Contents	
Introduction	2
<b>1. School Profile</b>	2
<b>2. Whole School Engagement</b> YWPS Engagement Statement The Role of Curriculum Engagement Strategies & Programs	3
<b>3. Rights and Responsibilities</b> YWPS Statement of Rights Responsibilities Bullying & Cyberbullying	6
<b>4. Shared Expectations</b> Expectations of staff Expectations of students Expectations of parents / carers	7
<b>5. School Actions and Consequences</b>	8
6. Appendices	10
7. References	11

Patified by: YWPS School Council



## Student Engagement Policy

### Introduction

“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.” (Effective Schools are Engaging Schools, DEECD, 2009.)

Student Engagement is an educational concept used to describe students’ ongoing interest in, and interaction with, their learning and their school community. This Student Engagement Policy articulates the expectations of the Yarraville West Primary School community in relation to student engagement. It is a collaborative document (with input from teachers, students and parents) and it will change over time to continually reflect our school’s needs. This policy ensures that the school maintains its positive school culture and that our students continue to thrive personally, socially and academically. **YWPS does not permit any form of corporal punishment at any time.**

At YWPS we have a commitment to keeping children safe and happy. As a staff we comply with the child safe standards as outlined in Ministerial Order 870. Please see the Child Safe Policy and Code of Conduct for more information.

## 1. SCHOOL PROFILE

### Overview

Yarraville West Primary School is a government primary school located in one of Yarraville’s quiet residential areas. The school is within the South Western Region of the Department of Education and Training (DET). YWPS has served the schooling needs of the community for over 110 years, and the current school buildings were opened in 1985. Enrolments at the school have been increasing over recent years, and the current student population is over 800. Our students come from diverse cultural, ethnic and socioeconomic backgrounds.

### School Values & Vision

At YWPS we constantly strive to improve and extend the academic achievements of our students, whilst recognising the importance of social skills, problem solving, of being creative and adaptable. There is a strong focus on overall student wellbeing, and our school culture is inclusive and built on acceptance and respect. This is exemplified by our use of first names for everyone in the school community and our adopted school values of ‘Respect, Responsibility, Resilience and Teamwork’.

Our senior students came up with the following reflections on our school values:

**Respect** – *Can be seen through your behavior, by being helpful, caring, kind and nice. Using words as simple as ‘thank you’ can also show respect. If you are respectful to others, they will be respectful to you.*

**Responsibility** – *Responsibility is an important part of learning and growing up. To be responsible is to be mature, take pride in what you do and help out even when not asked to. Some responsibility you want, some you just have to have.*

**Resilience** – *Being resilient can be hard. Picking yourself up again, and again, and again... but it’s worth it in the long run. Don’t give up even though you might not be the greatest at what you are doing... keep trying!*

**Teamwork** – *Is when a group of people work together to produce something amazing! People bring different skills to a team. This means that you can achieve more than if you work on your own.*

YWPS is committed to providing a productive learning environment by ensuring that the school is a safe and secure environment for all members of our community. At YWPS, we aim to:

- Maintain a culture of mutual trust and respect that recognises that all members of the school community contribute to the safety, wellbeing and success of our students.
- Cultivate a strong sense of pride in our school, our students and our teachers.
- Encourage the development of a positive school tone and appropriate behaviour management systems throughout the school.
- Promote the expectation that the dignity and respect we show to each other will be extended to our community.

The achievements of the school rely on strong relationships with, and good communication between, all members of the school community; our students, staff and families, as together we *all* contribute to the safety, wellbeing and success of YWPS students.

Our school motto is **Great Kids, Great School, Great Community!**

We are proud of our school, and proud of our students.

## **2. WHOLE SCHOOL ENGAGEMENT**

### **Engagement Statement**

At YWPS we believe that engaged students display a sense of wellbeing, that they display positive behaviours and high levels of attendance. Therefore, YWPS places emphasis on striving to engage all students, in all areas of their education, at all times.

### **The Role of Curriculum**

We believe that “student wellbeing and student learning outcomes are inextricably linked” (Effective Schools are Engaging Schools, DEECD, 2009) and so it is important that our curriculum be as exciting and engaging as possible.

The teaching and learning practices of YWPS are based on a value system and learning framework which recognises that:

- Learning develops best when children are actively engaged in their own learning.
- Learning proceeds at many different rates.
- Learning is significantly enhanced within a safe environment.
- Positive teacher/learner relationships are critical for effective learning to take place.

Specifically, our curriculum is designed to ensure our students are knowledgeable, challenged and engaged and, to this end, we adopt an ‘inquiry learning’ approach. Inquiry learning is an active thinking and learning process that requires our students to:

- Form questions that enable purposeful and worthwhile information gathering.
- Set goals for their own learning.
- Make plans for finding the information they need.
- Decide on the appropriate sources of information.
- Evaluate the information they gather.
- Use their data to form answers that build on, and extend, their prior knowledge and lead to deeper understanding.

Our Inquiry curriculum is based around broad concepts rather than specific topics, and it allows students to be both problem posers and problem solvers. This approach keeps our curriculum relevant, ever changing, challenging and engaging. An ‘inquiry learning’ approach is also evident in our English and Maths curriculum.

## **Engagement Strategies & Programs**

YWPS understands that our students have mixed and varied needs and so our engagement strategies must range from the broad (school-wide) to the individual (student-specific) and they must encourage behavioural engagement, emotional engagement and cognitive engagement.

The key engagement strategies and programs used within the school to achieve this are outlined below.

**Attendance:** YWPS recognises that full attendance is conducive to student engagement, allowing students to maximise their learning opportunities and teachers to teach effectively. YWPS also recognises that when a student begins to disengage from learning, attendance can become less consistent.

Regular roll taking is a valuable indicator of engagement or emerging issues. At YWPS rolls are marked twice a day allowing the school to monitor both the attendance, and lateness, of students. Ongoing issues of attendance are then followed up by our Assistant Principal of Welfare.

**Bounce Back:** Bounce Back is a wellbeing and resilience program. We may teach stand alone lessons or build it into our Inquiry curriculum. Bounce Back offers practical strategies to help children and young people function well at school and in life. It promotes positive mental health, wellbeing and resilience for students and teachers, and it promotes safe and supportive classroom and school learning environments.

**Bucket Filling:** Bucket filling is a strategy we introduce in Prep to help promote positive behaviours and relationships. The premise is that we all carry an invisible bucket in which we keep our good thoughts and feelings – when our buckets are full, we are happy; when they are empty, we are sad – and students learn that we can fill, or dip into, our own bucket or the buckets of others. The idea of bucket filling is to encourage students to make positive choices, personally and interpersonally. Many Grade 1/2 teachers choose to continue the concept of Bucket Filling in their classrooms.

**Buddies:** Our buddy program ensures that every child in the school is matched with an older or younger buddy. Through the development of a significant friendship with a student from another year level, the program allows our younger students to bond more closely with their school and provides our older students with an understanding of their responsibility to ‘look out’ for their younger friends – helping to increase the likelihood of positive school behaviour. The buddy program promotes the development of friendships and the strengthening of school values.

**Engaging Students with Disability:** All students at YWPS should thrive personally, socially and academically, including students with disabilities. Students with disabilities attending YWPS are able to work successfully within the mainstream school setting with the support of additional, specific, engagement strategies including our Student Support Service Officers, our Educational Psychologist and our Speech Therapist. Yarraville West has an inclusive policy for students with disabilities.

**eSmart Schools:** YWPS is an eSmart school. The Alannah and Madeline Foundation developed eSmart, which “aims to make cybersafety a normal part of every young person's life by equipping them to use technologies in ways that protect them from the associated risks” ([esmitschools.com.au](http://esmitschools.com.au)). The initiative is designed to reduce cyberbullying and bullying and to positively engage students (by illustrating that expected behavioural norms still exist within our new technological landscape).

**Extension:** YWPS must engage all students at all levels, and extension strategies are important to develop and extend children working significantly above the expected level. These students’ learning experiences can be extended daily in the classroom (where activities are open-ended and allow for stepped learning opportunities). Additionally, we have a coach to support these students and their teachers within YWPS. Finally, opportunities are available both within the school and through external organisations to provide further challenging and enriching activities and experiences (including the Maths Olympiad, GATEWAYS programs, solar boats, Tournament

of the Minds, etc).

**Friendship/Social Groups:** YWPS actively tries to identify students at risk of disengaging from their learning due to difficulties in building and maintaining positive social relationships. Once identified, these students can be nominated by their teachers to participate in special small focus groups, aiming to foster positive relationships and resilience through appropriate behaviour and pragmatic language.

**Incursions:** Wellbeing oriented incursions play a valued role in our engagement strategy, as they help YWPS to promote its values and grow its positive school culture. Recent incursions for students have included the Life Education Van\* and wellbeing focused performances from Brainstorm Productions. Recent parent sessions have included topics such as Cybersafety and Parenting for Resilience.

\* Life Education is the largest, independent, Australian, health and drug education provider for school children. The Life Education Van visits YWPS on alternate years, delivering a program to empower students to make safe, healthy and positive lifestyle choices, which we see as beneficial to students ongoing social and behavioural wellbeing.

**Literacy and Numeracy Recovery:** At times during their schooling, some students need extra support to master skills and concepts. YWPS identifies students in need (through ongoing observation and assessment made by teachers) and adopts specific recovery strategies before students begin to disengage from their learning.

We have a literacy coach and numeracy coach working with teachers and students across the school. The coaches assist with planning and staff professional development. YWPS also has literacy intervention programs including Reading Recovery and Leveled Literacy Intervention. Reading Recovery is a short-term, intensive, early literacy acceleration program, which helps students in Grade One who have not yet established effective reading and writing skills. The Leveled Literacy Intervention program is designed for students across the school who may need extra assistance.

**Positive Playground Program:** YWPS is presented with a unique challenge in that our physical school grounds are small for our number of students. Wellbeing strategies, to support positive behaviours and relationships, are important to ensure the ongoing safety and happiness of our students during playtime. These strategies include:

- Playtime Activities: areas are set up for Prep students who may prefer to draw, do puzzles or engage in other, quieter, activities during their playtime.
- The Values Tables and Friendship Stops: our colourful tables are painted with the school's four values. The Friendship Stops are benches that have been decorated by the school's Environment Club in 2016. Both the tables and Friendship Stops are designed for any child to come and sit at, and wait for a friend, or new acquaintance, to pass by and chat.
- Yard Duty Folders: incidents that occur during playtime are documented by the teacher on duty, patterns of repeated behaviour are identified, and incidents are monitored/followed up by the welfare team every week.
- Library time: the library is available to students who may prefer to read or use the computers.
- Clubs & groups: other club and group activities are available during playtime, including; junior & senior school choir, knitting club, lego club, netball, basketball, debating and environment club.

**Professional Development:** Teacher professional development improves teacher practice and, therefore, student learning and so YWPS invests in this area. Areas covered in professional development include literacy, numeracy, ICT, inquiry, wellbeing and highly able learners. Development can happen at a whole school, team or individual level, and we engage external consultants when necessary. The staff at YWPS also have ongoing opportunities for professional learning to help cater for students with disabilities.

**School Camp Program:** To support our students to reach their full potential (personally, socially, and academically) YWPS has in place a fantastic school camp program. The challenges that students face while on camp (away from home and school) are unique, and we place value on the friendships made, skills learned and experiences shared at camp. Grade 2 students and Grade 3/4 students attend separate two night camps, both in Term 4, while Grade 5/6 students take

part in a three night camp in the first half of the year. Prep and Grade 1 students must wait for their turn away at camp! These students attend their own 'Prep Night of Fun' and 'Grade 1 Night of Fun' held at school, outside of school hours, in Term 4.

**Student Voices:** YWPS feels that directly engaging with our students, by encouraging them to find their voice, and have their say, strengthens relationships within the school community and fosters the school values of respect, responsibility and teamwork. To this end, our student voices include:

– The *Junior School Council*: student representatives from Grade 3–6 classes who are elected each year by their classmates. The JSC members meet weekly, supported by a teacher, and are encouraged to discuss current school issues and projects.

– The *eSmart Ambassadors*: a group of students who are able to offer their expertise in matters related to both technology and wellbeing. They help develop guidelines around the use of technology and provide opinions and suggestions on how to make our school a safe and happy place for everyone.

At different times throughout the year, groups of students may be involved in activities such as planning our Wellbeing Week, or helping to develop documents produced by students for students. Examples of this include products such as our 'Bulldoze Bullying Brochure' or documents related to Child Safe Standards.

**Values Certificates and Achievement Wristbands:** In 2015 we received a BullyStoppers Grant. We used these funds to support two new initiatives in our school. The first is our Values Certificates. Primarily for our younger students, teachers award these certificates to children who demonstrate our school values. The Junior School Council designed the certificates in 2015, incorporating artwork from children across the school. The second initiative is our Achievement Wristbands for students in Grades 3 – 6. Students submit an application to receive their wristband. The application involves addressing four criteria, which align with our four school values of Respect, Responsibility, Resilience and Teamwork.

**Transition Programs:** YWPS understands that transition periods (either into Grade Prep, between grades, and then on from Grade 6) can be both exciting and challenging. To address each of these transitions, and to minimise their associated stresses, a number of transition programs operate at YWPS. We have a Kindergarten to Prep transition program, a Grade 6 to 7 transition program, and we run whole school transition sessions in Term 4 to prepare every students for the following year.

**Wellbeing Week:** 2016 saw the inaugural Wellbeing Week at Yarraville West. This was in response to the Building Resilience in School Communities program we were involved in. The Wellbeing Week activities focused on several aspects of building resilience and promoting wellbeing amongst our school community. Due to the positive response received from students, staff and parents, this will become an annual event.

**Working in Partnership with Families:** YWPS extends a voice to families within the school community, and actively seeks family involvement, via a number of avenues. These include formal posts (for example, a position on School Council) and less formal roles (for example, helping in class, volunteering with sports or school banking). These opportunities are fully explained in the 2015 Family Resource Book.

In Conclusion...

Our engagement strategies are intended to meet the needs of each child, and the school community as a whole. They are continually assessed, evaluated, redesigned and built upon to ensure that they continue to reflect the needs of our students.

### **3. RIGHTS & RESPONSIBILITIES**

#### **Statement of Rights**

Students, staff and families of YWPS have a right to fully participate in an educational environment that is safe, supportive and inclusive, and as members of our school community we all have certain rights, including:

- The right to equal opportunities.
- The right to diversity.
- The right to freedom of expression.
- The right to freedom of thought, conscience, religion and belief.
- The right to fair decision making processes.
- The right to be safe and to be protected from cruel treatment.
- The right to privacy.

These rights exist within our school community, as within our wider community, and are aligned with rights indicated under Victoria's 'Charter of Human Rights & Responsibilities Act', 2006.

### **Responsibilities**

YWPS acknowledge that rights come with associated responsibilities and that, to ensure that our rights are upheld, all members of the YWPS community must also accept certain responsibilities, including that:

- The YWPS community will respect all other members, and treat every person with kindness and humanity.
- Our community will oppose social exclusion, for any reason.
- We will act towards one another in a spirit of acceptance, individually, and between groups of families, communities, races or religions.
- No one within our community has the right to injure, and we will respect life and health.
- We respect our surrounding; the buildings, green spaces and everything within.
- We resolve conflicts without violence.
- We speak and act truthfully, and we should not lie.

We take these responsibilities (which are aligned with UNESCO's 'Declaration of Human Duties and Responsibilities', 1998) seriously, and feel that by working within the boundaries of our rights and responsibilities, YWPS can better uphold our school values and vision.

### **Bullying and Cyberbullying**

"Bullying is an ongoing misuse of power in relationships through repeated verbal, physical and/or social behaviour that causes physical and/or psychological harm.

It can involve an individual or a group misusing their power over one or more persons.

Bullying can happen in person or online, and it can be obvious (overt) or hidden (covert). Bullying of any form or for any reason can have long-term effects on those involved, including bystanders.

Single incidents and conflicts or fights between equals, whether in person or online, are not defined as bullying."

('Bullying Hurts' brochure, Alannah and Madeline Foundation, 2015.)

YWPS is a student body of over 700 members and, as with all schools, bullying can occur. Our rights (to be safe and to be protected from cruel behaviour) and responsibilities (to respect others and to act kindly and without violence) dictate that YWPS take seriously our duty to prevent bullying. For comprehensive information relating to bullying and cyberbullying, the Student Engagement Policy should be read in conjunction with the Bullying Prevention Policy.

## **4. SHARED EXPECTATIONS**

*"We now know that educators will not greatly improve a child's progress unless they find ways of getting school and home into harmony." (Hedley Beare, DET online, 2013.)*

Our school community includes our students, staff and families. This community shares certain

expectations of one another, in regards to student engagement, attendance and behaviour, which, when applied together, will improve *our students' academic and social experiences at YWPS*.

<b>Shared expectations of our STAFF</b>	
Engagement	<p><i>We expect staff to:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop flexible teaching styles to engage learners.</li> <li>• Deliver curriculum and assessments that challenge and extend students.</li> <li>• Develop positive relationships with students as a basis for engagement and learning.</li> </ul>
Attendance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promote regular attendance at school.</li> <li>• Monitor and follow up on absences.</li> </ul>
Behaviour	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lead by example by modeling appropriate behaviour.</li> <li>• Teach students social skills and values through curriculum and classroom activities.</li> <li>• Use behavior management strategies that reflect the behaviours expected from students and which focus on supporting positive behaviours.</li> <li>• Share strategies and support each other to reflect on one's individual approach to behaviour management.</li> <li>• Involve specialist expertise where necessary.</li> <li>• Uphold the expectations outlined in the Child Safe Code of Conduct.</li> </ul>

<b>Shared expectations of our STUDENTS</b>	
Engagement	<p><i>We expect students to:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have high expectations for their own learning.</li> <li>• Respect, value and learn from the differences of others.</li> </ul>
Attendance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attend school every day that the school is open to students.</li> <li>• Arrive on time to classroom and be ready to learn.</li> </ul>
Behaviour	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support each other's learning by behaving in a way that is respectful.</li> <li>• Be motivated to learn and be engaged in the learning process.</li> <li>• Understand that any form of bullying is unacceptable.</li> <li>• Be prepared to learn and explore their full potential.</li> <li>• Contribute to a positive school environment that is safe, happy and inclusive.</li> <li>• Abide by the yard guidelines.</li> <li>• Understand that adults have a responsibility to keep them safe.</li> </ul>

<b>Shared expectations of our PARENTS / CARERS</b>	
Engagement	<p><i>We expect parents/carers to:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work in an educational partnership with the school regarding their child's learning and wellbeing.</li> <li>• Actively support their child's learning by building positive relationships with members of the school community.</li> <li>• Support the school's efforts to educate young people in a diverse world by promoting an understanding and appreciation of diversity in the home.</li> <li>• Attend parent-teacher meetings, student activities, school celebrations, community events where possible.</li> </ul>
Attendance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure students attend school and have the appropriate learning materials.</li> <li>• Supply an explanation in the event of non-attendance.</li> <li>• Deliver students on time to school and ready to learn.</li> <li>• Ensure enrolment details are kept up to date.</li> </ul>



Behaviour	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support the school’s behavioural expectations in order to promote a consistent approach to learning both in and out of school.</li> <li>• Promote respectful relationships within the school community.</li> <li>• Raise issues or concerns with the school in a manner consistent with the ‘Parents Complaints Procedure’.</li> <li>• Uphold the expectations outlined in the Child Safe Code of Conduct.</li> </ul>
-----------	--

## **5. SCHOOL ACTIONS and CONSEQUENCES**

YWPS strives to engage all students; to facilitate positive behaviours, foster healthy friendships and support beneficial learning choices. We also believe in a cohesive and consistent approach to inappropriate behaviour, while acknowledging that there can not be a single prescriptive response to each and every situation.

From experience, we know that no two situations can be dealt with in exactly the same way. This is because there are a number of differing factors that affect each situation – the life circumstances of the student, his / her involvement in prior incidents, the severity of the incident – but our students will always be treated fairly and with respect.

Students are given the opportunity to explain their version of events through discussion with the classroom or yard duty teacher. With more serious incidents, discussions may also involve leadership and/or parents, and in cases of conflict between students, mediation is provided where necessary.

### **Contacting parents/carers**

YWPS ask parents/carers to understand that they will not be informed about every incident that their child is involved in. Where an incident is small, or a one-off, YWPS believe that students might be extended the opportunity to learn and grow independently. We will involve parents/carers as soon as we believe we can achieve more by working together, in the best interests of the student. We ask you to trust the school in this regard.

### **Incident Management Flowcharts**

Incidents are managed in accordance with our incident management flowcharts. These charts:

- Refer to specific levels of incidents at YWPS (and these levels have been discussed, and are understood, by all YWPS staff).
- Are specific in the stages of a response, so as to be consistent for all students.
- Are broad enough to allow students to be dealt with in the manner that the school deems most appropriate for the student and the situation.

(Appendix 1: Yard Duty Incident Management Flowchart, and Appendix 2: Classroom Incident Management Flowchart.)

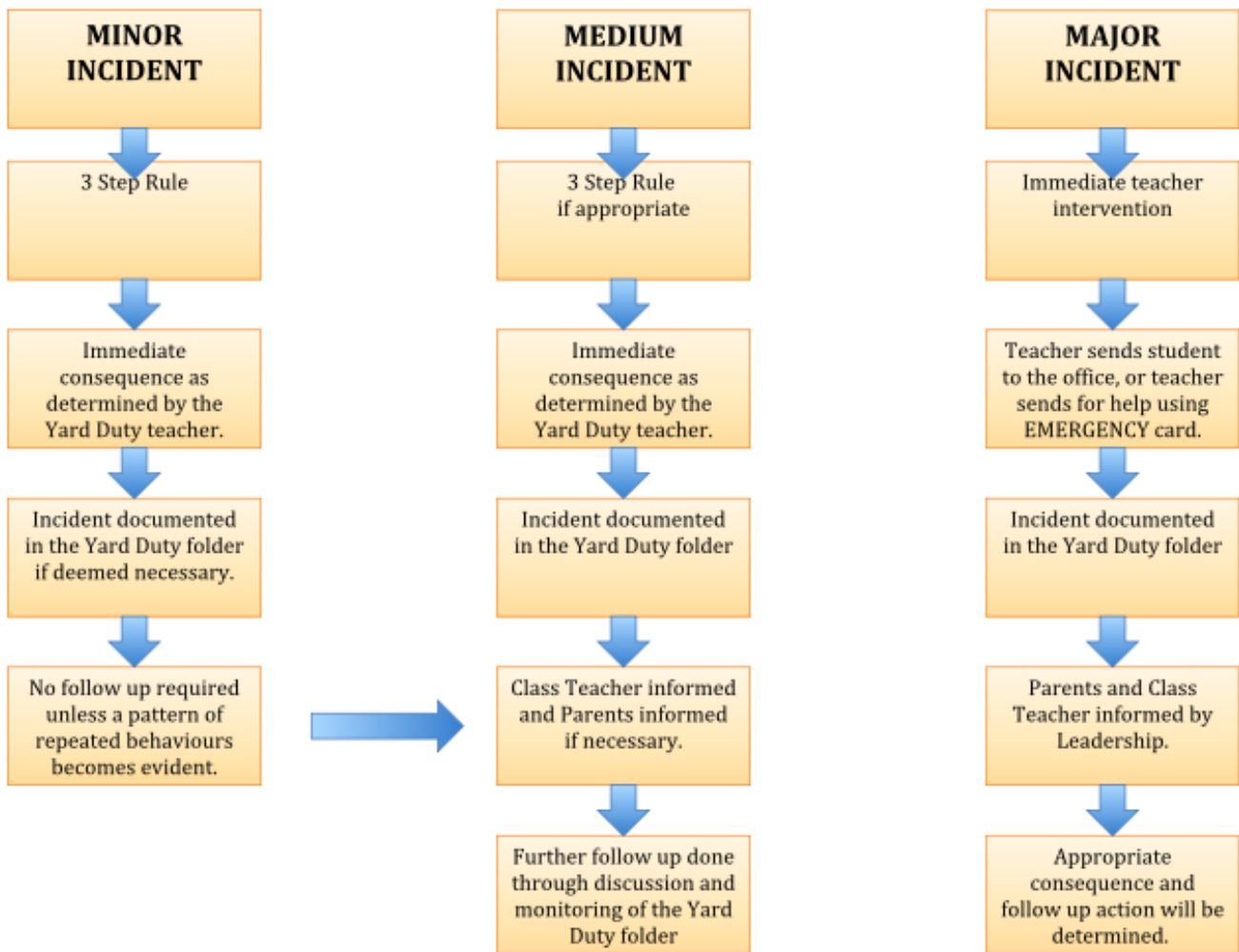
At YWPS actions and consequences are proportional and logical to the nature of the behaviour and appropriate to the student. We realise the importance of identifying and addressing the root cause(s) of the behaviour if we are to keep our students happy, healthy and safe, and help students to reach their full potential.

N.B. The Education Training and Reform Act (2006) prohibits the use of corporal punishment in any Victorian Government school.

## 6. APPENDICES

### Appendix 1: *Yard Duty Incident Management Flow Chart*

#### YARD DUTY INCIDENT MANAGEMENT – YARRAVILLE WEST PRIMARY



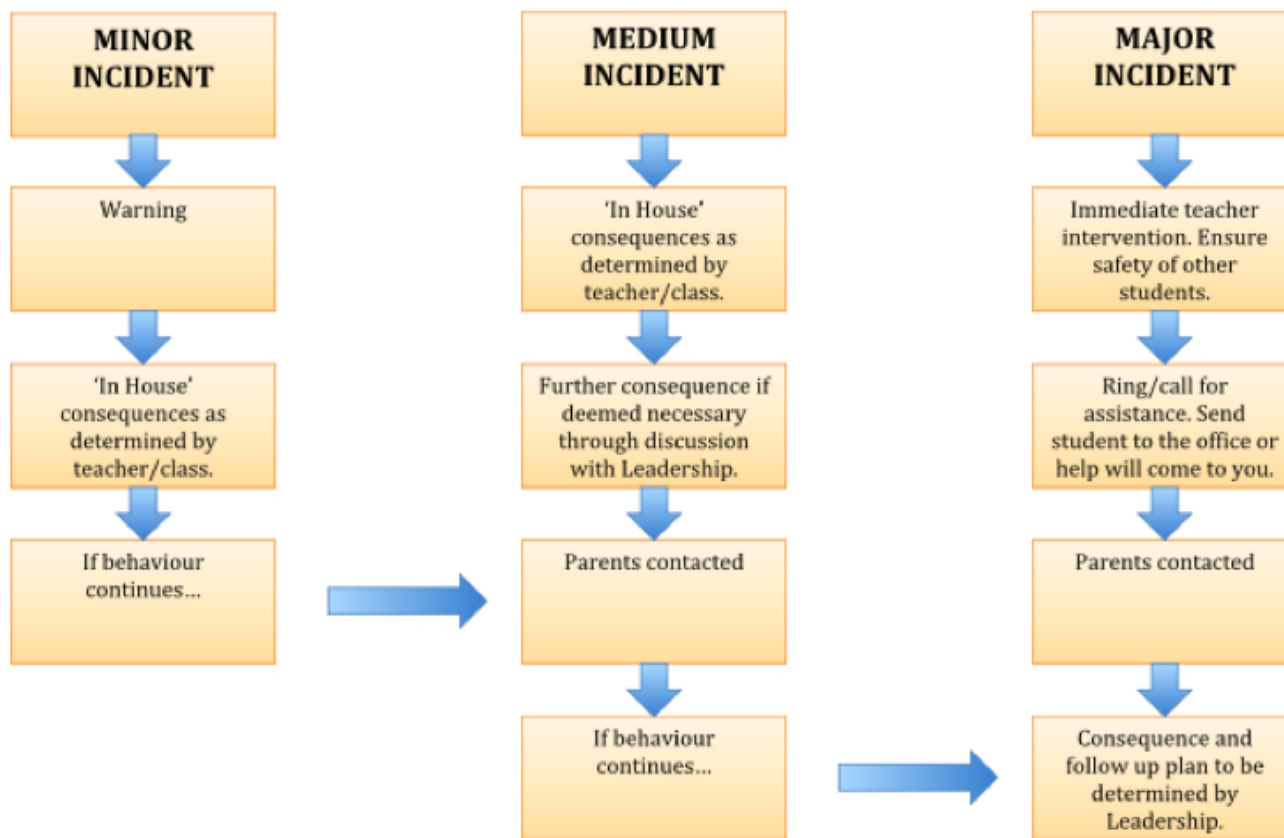
#### Examples of Yard Incidents

A minor incident: not sharing the ball

A medium incident: damaging school property

A major incident: being out of bounds

## CLASSROOM INCIDENT MANAGEMENT – YARRAVILLE WEST PRIMARY



### Examples of Classroom Incidents

A minor incident: disrupting others' learning

A medium incident: repeatedly not following teacher instructions

A major incident: action endangering self, or other students

## 7. REFERENCES

The Alannah and Madeline Foundation 2015, *Bullying Hurts*. Available from: <http://www.amf.org.au>

Department of Education and Early Childhood Development 2009, 'Effective Schools are Engaging Schools.' Available from: <https://www.eduweb.vic.gov.au/edulibrary/public/stuman/wellbeing/segpolicy.pdf>

Department of Education and Training 2014. 'The Student Engagement Policy.' Available from: <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/participation/Pages/engagepol.aspx>

eSmart Schools: About Us, 2015. Available from: <https://www.esmartschools.org.au/General/Pages/AboutUs.aspx>

Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission, n.d., 'Victoria's Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities.' Available from: <http://www.humanrightscommission.vic.gov.au/index.php/the-charter>

Wikipedia, 2015, 'Declaration of Human Duties and Responsibilities.' Available from: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Declaration\\_of\\_Human\\_Duties\\_and\\_Responsibilities](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Declaration_of_Human_Duties_and_Responsibilities)