



*The staff, parents and community of Upper Plenty Primary School
are committed to providing a nurturing, friendly environment
that inspires successful and confident lifelong learners.*

Upper Plenty Primary School
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23 May 2016

Dear Parents,

New department guidelines that have been released require parents to be aware and have access to the following policies;

- Statement of Values
- Social media and your school
- Creating respectful and safe school communities
- Upper Plenty community grievance policy

In a few weeks I will advertise a parent forum to take place with the objective to talk about these documents and get parent feedback. This forum will most likely take place just after school drop off and all parents are welcome to attend.

You will also have access to these documents through our webpage and skoolbag app.

If you have any questions about these documents please contact the school.

Thank you

Linda Varker

Acting-Principal



UPPER PLENTY PRIMARY SCHOOL

UNDERSTANDING PARTICIPATION PERSISTENCE SUCCESS

STATEMENT OF VALUES

PROMOTING HEALTHY, SAFE AND RESPECTFUL SCHOOL COMMUNITIES

Upper Plenty Primary School recognises the importance of the partnership between schools and parents to support student learning, engagement and wellbeing. We share a commitment to, and a responsibility for, ensuring inclusive, safe and orderly environments for children and young people.

This Statement of Values sets out our behavioural expectations of all members in this school community, including the principal, all school staff, parents, students and visitors. It respects the diversity of individuals in our school community and addresses the shared responsibilities of all members in building safe and respectful school communities.

Discrimination, sexual and other forms of harassment, bullying, violence, aggression and threatening behaviour are unacceptable and will not be tolerated in this school.

Our Statement of Values acknowledges that parents and school staff are strongly motivated to do their best for every child. Everyone has the right to differing opinions and views and to raise concerns, as long as we do this respectfully as a community working together.

RESPONSIBILITIES

AS PRINCIPALS AND SCHOOL LEADERS, WE WILL:

- Work collaboratively to create a school environment where respectful and safe conduct is expected of everyone.
- Behave in a manner consistent with the standards of our profession and meet core responsibilities to provide inclusive, safe and orderly environments.
- Plan, implement and monitor arrangements to ensure the care, safety, security and general wellbeing of all students in attendance at the school is protected.
- Identify and support students who are or may be at risk.
- Do our best to ensure every child achieves their personal and learning potential.
- Work with parents to understand their child's needs and, where necessary, adapt the learning environment accordingly.

- Respond appropriately when inclusive, safe or orderly behaviour is not demonstrated and implement appropriate interventions and sanctions when required.
- Make known to parents the school's communication and complaints procedures.
- Ask any person who is acting in an offensive or disorderly way to leave the school grounds.

AS TEACHERS AND ALL NON-TEACHING STAFF, WE WILL:

- Model positive behaviour to students consistent with the standards of our profession.
- Proactively engage with parents about student outcomes.
- Work with parents to understand the needs of each student and, where necessary, adapt the learning environment accordingly.
- Work collaboratively with parents to improve learning and wellbeing outcomes for students with additional needs.
- Communicate with the principal and school leaders in the event we anticipate or face any tension or challenging behaviours from parents.
- Treat all members of the school community with respect.

AS PARENTS, WE WILL:

- Model positive behaviour to our child.
- Ensure our child attends school on time, every day the school is open for instruction.
- Take an interest in our child's school and learning.
- Work with the school to achieve the best outcomes for our child.
- Communicate constructively with the school and use expected processes and protocols when raising concerns.
- Support school staff to maintain a safe learning environment for all students.
- Follow the school's complaints processes if there are complaints.
- Treat all school leaders, staff, students, and other members of the school community with respect.

AS STUDENTS, WE WILL:

- Model positive behaviour to other students.
- Comply with and model school values.
- Behave in a safe and responsible manner.
- Respect ourselves, other members of the school community and the school environment.
- Actively participate in school.
- Not disrupt the learning of others and make the most of our educational opportunities.

AS COMMUNITY MEMBERS, WE WILL:

- Model positive behaviour to the school community.
- Treat other members of the school community with respect.
- Support school staff to maintain a safe and orderly learning environment for all students.
- Utilise the school's communications policy to communicate with the school.

THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT WILL:

- Provide support and advice to principals to equip them to manage and respond to challenging behaviour of students, parents and staff.
- Provide practical guidance and resources to support schools to manage and respond to challenging behaviour of students, parents and staff.
- Provide practical guidance and resources to support schools respond to and prevent bullying and promote cyber-safety and wellbeing.
- Provide access to evidence based resources and strategies to increase student safety, wellbeing and engagement.
- Provide schools with practical and legal support as required.
- Provide parents with practical guidance and resources to resolve conflicts with the school.

CONSEQUENCES FOR FAILING TO UPHOLD THE STATEMENT OF VALUES

UNREASONABLE BEHAVIOURS

Behaviours that are considered inappropriate on and adjacent to school grounds or in relation to school business and that do not uphold the principles of this Statement of Values include when a person:

- is rude, aggressive or harasses others
- sends rude, confronting or threatening letters, emails or text messages
- is manipulative or threatening
- speaks in an aggressive tone, either in person or over the telephone

- makes sexist, racist or derogatory comments
- inappropriately uses social media as a forum to raise concerns/make complaints against the school
- is physically intimidating, e.g. standing very close.

CONSEQUENCES

Principals are responsible for determining what constitutes reasonable and unreasonable behaviour.

Unreasonable behaviour and/or failure to uphold the principles of this Statement of Values may lead to further investigation and the implementation of appropriate consequences. This may include:

- utilising mediation and counselling services
- alternative communication strategies being applied
- formal notice preventing entry onto school premises or attendance at school activities. Written notice will follow any verbal notice given.
- an intervention order being sought
- informing the police which may result in a charge of trespass or assault

By agreeing to meet specified standards of positive behaviour, everyone in our school community can be assured that they will be treated with fairness and respect. In turn, this will help to create a school that is safe and orderly, where everyone is empowered to participate and learn.



**Department of
Education & Training**

Social Media & Your School

Be a positive role model by demonstrating respectful and responsible behaviours when communicating with and about your child's school online.



Times have changed

A few years ago parents discussed concerns or issues with friends at the school gate. Today, with the internet, mobile phones and social media, discussions between you and your friends can reach a far wider audience than ever before.

Social media can provide an enjoyable way to socialise online and keep you connected with what is going on in your school community.

While these technologies can be great for sharing ideas and keeping in touch, don't forget that comments about your school community can have greater impact than expected and can have very real consequences for the reputations of individuals including teachers, principals, other parents, students and yourself.

As a parent and carer, you are your child's first role model when it comes to online behaviour. Make sure your online conduct demonstrates how they can use social media respectfully and safely.

There are also legal implications around what people are able to post and share about others. The idea of privacy in the online world can be confusing but essentially posting or sharing personal information about another person online requires consent.



Top tips for positive and respectful online communication with your school community

Avoid posting negative comments that identify your school or individuals.

Feedback from the school community is important for schools and the department. Each Victorian Government school has a complaints process for raising concerns. If you have a concern, rather than go online, speak directly to your child's teacher, Assistant Principal or Principal.

If after having this conversation you feel that your concerns have not been resolved, you can contact the **Community Liaison Officer** at your closest Department of Education and Training Regional Office, who will assist you and the school to find a solution. For more information on raising a concern or issue with your child's school see:

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/contact/Pages/complainschool.aspx>

Remember: serious instances of inappropriate online behavior may constitute a criminal offence and become a police matter. School staff may obtain personal legal advice if they feel that online content seriously impacts their reputation.

Social Media & Your School

Try not to be emotive or hasty.
Keep comments calm and polite.

Before you post something online about your child's school ask yourself:

- Am I being a good role model for my child?
- Will this information reflect badly on me?
- Does the school community or individual really need to know this information?
- Is this information relevant, helpful and positive?
- Will this information upset or embarrass the school community or an individual?
- Am I making situation worse?

If things do get heated online consider logging out and taking time to relax.



Be aware of what you are sharing
and with whom.

Remember that the legal implications around sharing personal information applies to images and video presented online.

As the parent/carer of your child, you have the right to choose who sees your child's personal information, including their image online. You also have a responsibility to **not share** the personal details of other children.

If you upload photos on social media of school events, be aware of who is in the background. Some parents and caregivers do not want themselves or their children on social media. It is recommended that you never tag a child's image with any personal information.

If your child's personal information or image has been shared on social media without your consent you can request its removal by the social network hosting it.

All Victorian Government schools have a policy on if and when it is appropriate to use cameras for filming or photographing school events. You can contact your child's school for more information.

If you share pictures of your children publicly through online photo-sharing sites and hashtags, remember that once it is shared, you have no control over how it is used or by whom. To avoid these photos being shared by others or used for purposes without your consent, make sure you set up your account security settings to share images only with close family and friends.



Social Media & Your School

Get to know social media.

It may be helpful to research online networks and mobile applications. In particular look at:

- Terms of Use
- Policies and procedures for the removal of content
- Privacy settings

Be proactive.

If you see something you feel should be removed, flag it. Some sites will allow you to do this anonymously.

Address inappropriate content.

If you encounter inappropriate content online, there are a number of steps you can take:

- Refrain from responding.
- Take a screen capture or print a copy of the concerning online content.
- If you think the content is explicit, pornographic or exploitative of minors, contact the eSafety Commissioner <https://esafety.gov.au/complaints-and-reporting>
- Block the offending user.
- If the inappropriate or negative comments are in regards to your child's school or members of the school community you should also contact the school Principal.
- Report the content to the social media provider (e.g. Facebook). Providers can remove content that contravenes their Terms of Use.



How do I report inappropriate content?

Most websites have a 'report/block this person' or 'report/block this content' function. Links to report or block users can be found below:

Facebook

www.facebook.com/safety

Instagram

help.instagram.com

Google (including YouTube)

google.com/support/go/legal

Tumblr

www.tumblr.com/help

Twitter

support.twitter.com

eSafety Commissioner

<https://www.esafety.gov.au/complaints-and-reporting>

Further information

eSafety Commissioner

<https://www.esafety.gov.au/>

Bully Stoppers

www.education.vic.gov.au/bullystoppers

Creating Respectful and Safe School Communities

FAQs for Parents

What is the responsibility of my school/Principal to keep my child safe?

Schools and parents share a responsibility to ensuring respectful and safe school environments.

Principals and school leaders have legal and professional responsibility to ensure schools are safe. These responsibilities are underpinned by Occupational Health and Safety legislation as well as the Education and Training Reform Act and the contractual and professional obligations and standards of the Victorian teaching profession.

What is the Statement of Values?

The Statement of Values has been created to outline the shared expectations, roles and responsibilities of principals, teachers, parents, students, community members and the Department in maintaining respectful and safe schools.

Schools are being encouraged by DEECD to adapt the Statement of Values to appropriately reflect their school community.

What can I do if I do not feel I am being treated with care and respect by school staff?

The Statement of Values encompasses the mutual responsibility of school staff and parents treat each other with respect. Having a positive school culture that is welcoming for parents is at the core of every school educational mission. Every staff member and member of the school community has a positive role to play in that mission. As a parent, you have a right to raise your concerns and speak to the Principal about any concerns you may have.

I want to change the way the teacher/principal and I relate but am not sure about what to say or do differently?

Changing adult behaviour or a relationship is not easy however, experienced principals report that it works best where all parties decide on specific actions that they can try. A good starting point for a trusting relationship is to make clear how you wish to be spoken to. This might be as simple as asking to be greeted by your first name. Defining the scope of the discussion and setting boundaries can work too. For example, making clear you not only want to talk about the problem you are experiencing but also what you would like to see change is more likely to result in a positive solution and a productive working relationship.

If the relationship between myself and the Principal breaks down can I choose an advocate to speak on my behalf to the Principal?

Yes, you will need to inform the Principal that this is your wish and provide him or her with the reasons for your decision and the details of the person who is your advocate.

Where can I obtain information on the Statement of Values and further advice and assistance?

For more information on your school's Statement of Values, please contact your school directly.

For further advice and assistance you may wish to contact your region's Community Liaison Officer. Regional contact details are available online at

www.education.vic.gov.au/about/contact/Pages/regions.aspx

How are my principal and school being supported to implement the Statement of Values?

An online toolkit, 'Creating Respectful and Safe School Communities', has been made available to school staff on the Department's internal website. The toolkit promotes a staged response to preventing conflict between parents



and school staff. The toolkit also provides resources and support at each step of the staged response, including interventions and sanctions, where parents become persistently abusive or threatening and the safety of school community members is at risk. In addition, training is also being provided to Principals on effectively building positive, productive relationships.

What is a Parent and Principal Agreement?

The Parent and Principal Agreement provides clear information about what constitutes unreasonable behaviour, and the potential consequences. It is expected that a Parent and Principal Agreement will help to create a school that is safe and orderly, where everyone is empowered to participate and learn.

When could a Parent and Principal Agreement be used?

A Parent and Principal Agreement could be used in instances where a principal has already taken steps to address unreasonable behaviour and these have been unsuccessful, or the parent's behaviour becomes threatening.

Do I have to sign a Parent and Principal Agreement?

The Parent and Principal Agreement works most effectively when all parties are committed to upholding goals. Schools are not required to utilise the Agreement however they may choose to do so in situations where the relationship between the school and the parent is becoming difficult to manage.

When is a complaint considered resolved?

A complaint is considered to be resolved when the parent and the school and/or regional office and/or central office agree on an appropriate response or remedy.

Possible responses and remedies include:

- An explanation
- An acknowledgement of each other's perspective and agreement on ways to manage differences
- An apology or expression of regret
- An admission of fault
- A change of decision
- A change of policy, procedure or practice

- Agreement on what constitutes acceptable behaviour
- An undertaking that unacceptable behaviour will change

What if I am still unsatisfied with an outcome, or the way the teacher/principal and I relate?

If you do not feel a satisfactory outcome has been reached, you may contact your region's Community Liaison Officer to help facilitate a more positive relationship. Regional contact details are available online at www.education.vic.gov.au/about/contact/Pages/regions.aspx

As a final resort, a parent may bring forward a complaint against the school. More information about the Parent Complaints process, please see www.education.vic.gov.au/about/contact/Pages/complainschool.aspx



Upper Plenty Primary School

COMMUNITY GRIEVANCE

POLICY

Rationale:

- Positive, clear and effective processes for resolving grievances between the school and community members assists in the building of strong relationships, dispels anxiety, and ultimately provides students with an enhanced learning environment.

Aims:

- To provide clear, positive and fair processes that allow grievances to be aired and resolved in a timely and effective manner.

Implementation:

- Our school prides itself on clear, consultative and open communication.
- While we accept our responsibility to consult, and to communicate both clearly and effectively with the community, community members also have an obligation to read notices and newsletters, to attend briefings, and to seek clarification when required.
- There may, however, still be times when members of the community disagree or are confused about the things that we are doing.
- It is essential that the established process as outlined below is followed to resolve grievances:
 - Try to establish the facts as clearly possible, be wary of third hand information or gossip.
 - If the matter involves your child or an issue of everyday class operation, make an appointment to see their classroom teacher, detailing the reasons for the appointment.
 - An appointment should be made with the principal to discuss issues involving school policy, operations beyond your child's classroom, concerns about staff, or grievances that are probably not easily resolved.
 - The principal will provide the concerned community member with a copy of this '*Community Grievances Policy*' unless the matter is easily and satisfactorily resolved.
 - While 'in principle' support may be sought from the Family and Friends Group or School Council, both groups are in agreement that they will not simply become a conduit for community complaints, will not become involved in confidential or personal issues, and will generally refer specific grievances about individuals to the principal or the School Council president.
 - All grievances are to be kept as confidential as possible.
 - Community members may be accompanied by another person, in a support role, at appointments to resolve grievances.
- All formal discussions and processes involving grievances will be documented.
- The principal and School Council president will exercise his/her judgement as to whether or not they will act upon anonymous complaints.
- The principal will provide community members with appropriate departmental contact names and numbers if grievances are not resolved.

Evaluation:

- This policy will be reviewed by School Council as part of the school's four-year review cycle, in consultation with the Family and Friends Group and the wider school community.

This policy was last ratified by School Council in....

May 2012

This Policy will be ratified at the June 2016 School Council meeting

Parent Complaints

General Information

The Department of Education and Training is committed to treating everyone with dignity and respect and encourages good communication between parents and schools.

Schools, regions and the central office act in accordance with the Department's parent complaints policy and processes when managing your complaint. Further information about the policy *Addressing parents' concerns and complaints effectively: policy and guides*, including everyone's role in resolving concerns and complaints, can be found on the Department's website.

All concerns and complaints lodged with the Department about a Government school are addressed in line with relevant professional and administrative standards and in accordance with obligations and rights afforded under Victorian legislative and regulatory frameworks. These include the *Education and Training Reform Act 2006*, the *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006* and the *Equal Opportunity Act 2010*.



When contacting the school

Any appointments to speak with school staff about a complaint should be arranged through the school office.

- Plan what you will say so you can clearly explain what the problem is. You might want to make some notes to help you.
- Have some ideas about how the problem could be resolved realistically.
- Talk about the problem with your child's teacher/s by telephone or organise a face-to-face meeting. Most problems can be solved this way.
- If you still have a concern after talking to your child's teacher/s you may want to speak to the Assistant Principal or Principal.

When to contact the regional office

If the matter is not resolved by speaking to the Assistant Principal or Principal at your school, you can contact the community liaison officer at your regional office who will assist you and the school to find a solution.

- | | | |
|------------------------|-------------------|----------------|
| North-Eastern Victoria | General enquiries | 1300 333 231 |
| North-Western Victoria | Bendigo | (03) 5440 3111 |
| | Coburg | (03) 6488 9480 |
| South-Eastern Victoria | Dandenong | (03) 8765 5600 |
| | Moe | (03) 5127 0400 |
| South-Western Victoria | General enquiries | 1300 333 232 |

When to contact the central office

If the matter remains unresolved after discussions with your regional office you can send your complaint, in writing, to:

Deputy Secretary, Regional Services Group
 C/o Manager, School Operations and Governance Unit

GPO Box 4367, Melbourne 3001

E: community.stakeholders@edumail.vic.gov.au

Victorian Ombudsman

If, after all avenues for resolution of your complaint have been explored, and you are not satisfied with the way in which your complaint has been handled by the Department, you are able to contact the Victorian Ombudsman on (03) 9613 6222.

E: ombudvic@ombudsman.vic.gov.au

Further Information

If you would like further information about school policies you can visit the *School Policy and Advisory Guide* on the Department's website at: www.education.vic.gov.au

