

# **Dorset Primary School No.5132**

## **STUDENT WELLBEING AND ENGAGEMENT POLICY**

### **PURPOSE**

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that all students and members of our school community understand:

- our commitment to providing a safe and supportive learning environment for students
- expectations for positive student behaviour
- support available to students and families
- Dorset PS's policies and procedures for responding to inappropriate student behaviour.

Dorset PS is committed to providing a safe, secure and stimulating learning environment for all students. We understand that students reach their full potential only when they are happy, healthy and safe, and that a positive school culture helps to engage students and support them in their learning. Our school acknowledges that student wellbeing and student learning outcomes are closely linked.

The objective of this policy is to support our school to create and maintain a safe, supportive and inclusive school environment consistent with our school's values.

### **SCOPE**

This policy applies to all school activities, including camps and excursions.

### **POLICY**

#### **I. School Profile**

Dorset PS is located in the outer eastern suburbs. The school's population of students includes English as an Additional Language (EAL) and Indigenous students. Our school instils and nurtures the beliefs that every child can inspire others, achieve their goals and succeed in life-long learning.

The wider school community gives consistent and generous support to the school's programs and we encourage parents and community contribution and participation, with regard to improving students' engagement and well-being as a high priority.

Dorset PS offers a supportive environment, which promotes positive self-esteem and self-confidence where each child's achievements are recognised and valued.

The school strives to ensure that a cooperative and safe environment is fostered where learning is a shared experience involving children, teachers and parents.

#### **II. School vision, values and philosophy**

Dorset PS is an inclusive community that empowers all students to become passionate life-long learners, achieve their maximum potential and build their emotional physical and social wellbeing.

Dorset PS ensures that students, staff, parents and the wider school community have a safe and happy environment. The protection of each student's right to develop his/her self-discipline, self-esteem and confidence is of major importance within the school.

The school promotes and encourages effective learning and responsibility for one's actions, promoting our values of caring, respect, responsibility, honesty, excellence and tolerance. This leads to the development of a positive attitude towards others.

The school staff demonstrate a professional approach to the long term provision of quality educational programs and social learning.

### **III. Engagement strategies**

Dorset PS has developed a range of strategies to promote engagement, positive behaviour and respectful relationships for all students in our school. We acknowledge that some students may need extra social, emotional or educational support at school, and that the needs of students will change over time as they grow and learn.

A summary of the universal (whole of school), targeted (year group specific) and individual engagement strategies used by our school is included below:

#### Universal

- High and consistent expectations of all staff, students and parents/carers
- Prioritise positive relationships between staff and students, recognising the fundamental role this plays in building and sustaining student wellbeing
- Creating a culture that is inclusive, engaging and supportive
- Welcoming all parents/carers and being responsive to them as partners in learning
- Analysing and being responsive to a range of school data such as attendance, Attitudes to School Survey, Parent Survey data, student management data and school assessment data
- Deliver a broad curriculum to ensure that students are able to participate in subjects and programs that are tailored to their individual learning needs
- Teachers at Dorset PS use a High Impact Teaching Strategies (HITS) instructional framework to ensure an explicit, common and shared model of instruction to ensure that evidenced-based, high yield teaching practices are incorporated into all lessons
- Teachers at Dorset PS adopt a broad range of teaching and assessment approaches to effectively respond to the diverse learning styles, strengths and needs of our students and follow the standards set by the Victorian Institute of Teaching
- Our school's Statement of Values is incorporated into our curriculum and promoted to students, staff and parents so that they are shared and celebrated as the foundation of our school community
- Carefully planned transition programs to support students moving into different stages of their schooling
- Positive behaviour and student achievement is acknowledged in the classroom, and formally at school assemblies and communication to parents
- Monitor student attendance and implement attendance improvement strategies at a whole-school, cohort and individual level
- Students have the opportunity to contribute to and provide feedback on decisions about school operations through the Junior School Council. Students are also encouraged to speak with their teachers, Year Level Leader/Coordinator, Assistant Principal and Principal whenever they have any questions or concerns
- Students are provided with opportunities to build connections within the student community through lunchtime games and club programs
- All students have access to a school chaplain, Year Level Leaders/Coordinators, Assistant Principal and Principal if they would like to discuss a particular issue or feel as though they may need support of any kind. We are proud to have an 'open door' policy where students and staff are partners in learning
- We engage in school wide positive behaviour support with our staff and students, which includes programs such as Real Schools
- Programs, incursions and excursions developed to address issue-specific behaviour
- Buddy programs, Peer Mediation programs

### Targeted

- Each year level has a Year Level Leader/Coordinator who assists teachers to support the wellbeing of students in their year, and acts as a point of contact for students who may need additional support
- Connect all Koorie/Indigenous students with a Student Support Officer
- All students in Out of Home Care will be appointed a coordinator, have an Individual Learning Plan and will be referred to Student Support Services for an Educational Needs Assessment
- All staff will undertake professional development to support student engagement and wellbeing
- Staff will apply a trauma-informed approach to working with students who have experienced trauma

### Individual

Dorset PS implements a range of strategies that support and promote individual engagement. These can include:

- Building constructive relationships with students at risk or students who are vulnerable due to complex individual circumstances
- Meeting with student and their parent/carer to talk about how best to help the student engage with school
- Developing an Individual Learning Plan and/or a Behaviour Support Plan by engaging Student Support Groups, see: [DET- Student Support Groups](#)
- Considering if any environmental changes need to be made, for example changing the classroom set up
- Referring the student to:
  - i. School-based wellbeing supports
  - ii. Student Support Services
  - iii. Appropriate external supports such as council based youth and family services, other allied health professionals, headspace, child and adolescent mental health services or ChildFirst

Where necessary the school will support the student's family to engage by:

- Being responsive and sensitive to changing personal circumstances and health/wellbeing
- Collaborating, where appropriate and with the support of the student and their family, with any external allied health professionals, services or agencies that are supporting the student
- Monitoring individual student attendance
- Running regular Student Support Group meetings for all students:
  - with a disability or other complex needs which require ongoing support/monitoring
  - in Out-of-Home Care

#### **IV. Identifying students in need of support**

Dorset PS is committed to providing the necessary support to ensure our students are supported intellectually, emotionally and socially. The Leadership team and Student Wellbeing team play a significant role in developing and implementing strategies that help identify students in need of support and enhance student wellbeing.

Dorset PS will utilise the following information and tools to identify students in need of extra emotional, social or educational support:

- Personal, health and learning information gathered upon enrolment and while the student is enrolled
- Attendance records
- Academic performance

- Observations by school staff such as changes in engagement, behaviour, self-care, social connectedness and motivation
- Attendance, detention and suspension data
- Engagement with families
- Self-referrals or referrals from peers

#### **V. Student rights and responsibilities**

All members of our school community have a right to experience a safe and supportive school environment. We expect that all students, staff, parents and carers treat each other with respect and dignity. Our school's Statement of Values highlights the rights and responsibilities of members of our community. Students have the **right** to:

- Participate fully in their education
- Feel safe, secure and happy at school
- Learn in an environment free from bullying, harassment, violence, discrimination or intimidation
- Express their ideas, feelings and concerns.

Students have the **responsibility** to:

- Participate fully in their educational program
- Display positive behaviours that demonstrate respect for themselves, their peers, their teachers and members of the school community
- Respect the right of others to learn.

Students who may have a complaint or concern about something that has happened at school are encouraged to speak to their parents or carers and approach a trusted teacher or a member of the school leadership team.

#### **VI. Student behavioural expectations**

Behavioural expectations of students, staff and families are embedded in our school's Statement of Values. Student bullying behaviour will be responded to consistently with Dorset PS's Bullying Prevention Policy.

When a student acts in breach of the behaviour standards of our school community, Dorset PS will institute a staged response. Where appropriate, parents will be informed about the inappropriate behaviour and the disciplinary action taken by teachers and other school staff.

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

Disciplinary measures that may be applied include:

- Warning a student that their behaviour is inappropriate
- Teacher controlled consequences such as moving a student in a classroom or other reasonable and proportionate responses to misbehaviour
- Restorative practices
- Withdrawal of privileges
- Referral to the Level Leader/Year Level Coordinator
- Detentions
- Suspension
- Expulsion

Suspension and expulsion are measures of last resort and may only be used in particular situations consistent with Department policy, available at: [DET: Student Engagement](#). Corporal punishment is prohibited in our school and will not be used in any circumstance.

## **VII. Engaging with families**

Dorset PS values the input of parents and carers, and we will strive to support families to engage in their child's learning and build their capacity as active learners. We aim to be partners in learning with parents and carers in our school community. We work hard to create successful partnerships with parents and carers by:

- Ensuring that all parents have access to our school policies and procedures, available on our school website
- Maintaining an open, respectful line of communication between parents and staff
- Providing parent volunteer opportunities so that families can contribute to school activities
- Involving families with homework and other curriculum-related activities
- Involving families in school decision making through School Council
- Coordinating resources and services from the community for families
- Including families in Student Support Groups, and developing individual plans for students.

## **VIII. Evaluation**

Dorset PS will collect data each year to understand the frequency and types of wellbeing issues that are experienced by our students so that we can measure the success or otherwise of our school based strategies and identify emerging trends or needs. Sources of data that will be assessed on an annual basis include:

- Student Attitudes to School Survey data
- Incidents data
- School reports
- Parent Opinion Survey
- Case management
- CASES21
- SOCS

## **REVIEW CYCLE**

This policy was last updated in September 2019 and is scheduled for review in September 2020.