



DORSET PRIMARY SCHOOL- NO.5132

STUDENT WELLBEING AND ENGAGEMENT POLICY



Help for non-English speakers

If you need help to understand this policy, please contact the office.

PURPOSE

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

- (a) our commitment to providing a safe and supportive learning environment for students
- (b) expectations for positive student behaviour
- (c) support available to students and families
- (d) our school's policies and procedures for responding to inappropriate student behaviour.

Dorset 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, where student participation is encouraged and valued, 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.

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- 2. School values, philosophy, and vision
- 3. Wellbeing and engagement strategies
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POLICY

1. School profile

Dorset was established in 1978 and is located in outer-eastern Melbourne. We have over 500 students enrolled from Foundation (Prep) to Grade 6, and nearly 50 school staff members including a specialised student counsellor.

Most of our students live locally and many of our students choose to walk to school or ride their bikes. We have developed close ties to the local Croydon community and many of our families are involved in local sporting clubs such as the South Croydon Football Club.

Our school is culturally diverse with 20% of families having a language background other than English (LOTE), with the largest LOTE groups being Burmese (Hakha Chin), Mandarin and

Hindi. The school also has strong representation from the Koorie community. We are proud of our diversity and inclusive school community.

We strive to provide a nurturing and challenging environment that empowers students to reach their personal best, both academically and socially.

2. School values, philosophy, and vision

Our Statement of Values and School Philosophy is integral to the work that we do and is the foundation of our school community. Students, staff and members of our school community are encouraged to live and demonstrate our core values of respect, integrity, gratitude and resilience at every opportunity.

Our school's vision is to empower students to reach their personal best, and fully equip them to contribute positively to society as happy, healthy young adults.

Our Statement of Values is available online on our website.

Wellbeing and engagement strategies

We have developed a range of strategies to promote engagement, an inclusive and safe environment, positive behaviour, and respectful relationships for all students in our school. We recognise the importance of student friendships and peer support in helping children and students feel safe and less isolated. 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

- Maintaining high and consistent expectations of all staff, students and parents/carers
- Prioritising positive relationships between staff and students as a crucial element of student wellbeing
- Embedding a school-wide culture of inclusiveness, involvement and support that empowers all students to participate and feel valued
- Recognising all parents/carers as partners in learning
- Responding to school data such as surveys, observations, and assessment data
- Using the DET Pedagogical Model to ensure an explicit, common, and shared model of instruction to ensure that evidenced-based, high yield teaching practices are incorporated into all lessons
- Adopting 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
- Incorporating our school's Statement of Values and School Philosophy into our curriculum and promoting it to students, staff, and parents so that they are shared and celebrated as the foundation of our school community
- Implementing transition programs to support students moving into different stages of their schooling
- Celebrating positive behaviour and student achievement in classrooms and assemblies
- monitoring student attendance and implement attendance improvement strategies

- engaging student voice and agency through our Junior School Council, year level meetings and assemblies. Students are widely encouraged to speak with their teachers whenever they have any questions or concerns.
- creating opportunities for cross—age connections amongst students through school plays, athletics, and Buddies.
- Welcoming students to refer to our counsellor if they would like to discuss a particular issue or feel as though they may need support of any kind.
- we engage in school wide positive behaviour support with our staff and students, which includes the Respectful Relationships program
- providing programs, incursions and excursions developed to address issue specific needs or behaviour (i.e. anger management programs)
- creating opportunities for student inclusion through lunchtime clubs
- planning protocols to empower our school community to identify, report and address inappropriate and harmful behaviours such as racism, homophobia and other forms of discrimination or harassment.

Targeted

- Providing IELPs (Individual Education and Learning Plans) to support engagement and empowerment in our Koorie students as part of our Aboriginal Learning, Wellbeing and Safety Action Plan
- Supporting EAL (English as an Additional Language)/CALD (culturally and linguistically diverse) students with targeted literacy support programs in their classrooms
- Providing literacy support and wellbeing supports to students from a refugee background, in addition to a specialised IELP tailored to their specific needs and capabilities
- Encouraging a positive and respectful learning environment for our students who identify as LGBTIQ+ and follow the Department’s policy on [LGBTIQ Student Support](#)
- Appointing a Learning Mentor in addition to an IELP and SSG (Student Support Group) meeting for any students in Out of Home Care in accordance with the Department’s policy on [Supporting Students in Out-of-Home Care](#), and providing access to an ENA (Educational Needs Assessment)
- Making necessary reasonable adjustments to learning programs and consulting with families where required for any students with disabilities
- Using a trauma-informed approach when working with students who have experienced trauma, and encouraging staff to undertake professional development in understanding the impact of trauma

Individual

We implement a range of strategies that support and promote individual engagement. These can include:

- building constructive relationships with all students, particularly those at risk or students who are vulnerable due to complex individual circumstances
- meeting with student and their parent/carer and necessary care teams to talk about how best to help the student engage with school
- developing an IELP and/or a Behaviour Plan where necessary
- considering if any environmental changes need to be made, for example changing the classroom set up

- referring the student to:
 - school-based wellbeing supports such as the counsellor
 - Student Support Services
 - 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 changes in the student's 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 and developing an Attendance Improvement Plans in collaboration with the student and their family
- engaging with our regional Koorie Engagement Support Officers
- running regular Student Support Group meetings for all students:
 - with a disability
 - in Out of Home Care
 - with other complex needs that require ongoing support and monitoring.

3. Identifying students in need of support

We are committed to providing the necessary support to ensure our students are supported intellectually, emotionally, and socially. The Leadership team plays a significant role in developing and implementing strategies help identify students in need of support and enhance student wellbeing. We 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

4. 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, racism, discrimination, or intimidation
- express their ideas, feelings, and concerns

Students have the responsibility to:

- speak up about their learning
- show respect for themselves and the people around them
- respect the right of others to learn and be treated respectfully

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.

Further information about raising a complaint or concern is available in our Complaints Policy.

5. Student behavioural expectations and management

Behavioural expectations of students are grounded in our school's Statement of Values/Student code of conduct.

Violence, bullying, and other offensive and harmful behaviours such as racism, harassment and discrimination will not be tolerated and will be managed in accordance with this policy.

When a student acts in breach of the behaviour standards of our school community, we will institute a staged response, consistent with the Department's policies on behaviour, discipline and student wellbeing and engagement. Where appropriate, parents will be informed about the inappropriate behaviour and the disciplinary action taken by school staff.

We investigate and implement restorative interventions to support student behaviour before considering disciplinary measures such as detention, withdrawal of privileges or withdrawal from class.

Disciplinary measures may be used as part of a staged intervention against inappropriate behaviour, in combination with other engagement and support strategies. These measures ensure that any 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 and potential withdrawal of privileges, with the aim of restoring behaviour and earning privileges back
- detentions
- behaviour support and intervention meetings
- suspension
- expulsion

Suspension, expulsion, and restrictive interventions are measures of last resort and may only be used in situations consistent with Department policy.

In line with Ministerial Order 1125, no student aged 8 or younger will be expelled without the approval of the Secretary of the Department of Education and Training.

The Principal of Dorset is responsible for ensuring all suspensions and expulsions are recorded on CASES21.

Corporal punishment is prohibited by law and will not be used in any circumstance at our school.

6. Engaging with families

Dorset 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 help opportunities so that families can contribute to school activities
- involving families with homework and other curriculum-related activities
- involving families in school decision making
- coordinating resources and services from the community for families
- including families in Student Support Groups where necessary

7. Evaluation

We 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 survey data
- incidents data
- school reports
- parent surveys
- case management
- CASES21, including attendance and absence data
- SOCS

Dorset will also regularly monitor available data dashboards to ensure any wellbeing or engagement issues are acted upon in a timely manner and any intervention occurs as soon as possible.

COMMUNICATION

This policy will be communicated to our school community in the following ways:

- Available publicly on our school's website and on Compass
- Included in staff induction processes
- Included in transition and enrolment packs
- Included as annual reference in school newsletter
- Made available in hard copy from school administration upon request

Our school will also ensure it follows the mandatory parent/carers notification requirements with respect to suspensions and expulsions outlined in the Department's policies at:

- [Suspension process](#)
- [Expulsions - Decision](#)

FURTHER INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

The following Department of Education and Training policies are relevant to this Student Engagement and Wellbeing Policy:

- [Attendance](#)
- [Student Engagement](#)
- [Child Safe Standards](#)
- [Supporting Students in Out-of-Home Care](#)
- [Students with Disability](#)
- [LGBTIQ Student Support](#)
- [Behaviour - Students](#)
- [Suspensions](#)
- [Expulsions](#)
- [Restraint and Seclusion](#)

POLICY REVIEW AND APPROVAL

Policy last reviewed	July 2022
Consultation	Consultation with School Council August 2022
Approved by	Principal
Next scheduled review date	July 2022