



## Student Engagement Policy

### Rationale

The Department of Education and Training (DET) is committed to providing safe, secure and stimulating learning environments in all Victorian government schools.

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.

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 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.

In establishing and maintaining a positive school culture, Dandenong Valley SDS community believes student wellbeing is everyone's responsibility, is a high priority and that physical, social and emotional wellbeing underpins effective student learning and positive behaviour.

### Aims:

- To ensure all members of the school community understand their legal obligations under relevant legislation including:
  - The Equal Opportunity Act 2010 (Vic)
  - The *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006* (Vic),
  - The Disability Standards for Education 2005
  - The *Education and Training Reform Act 2006* (Vic)
- To create a positive school culture that is fair and respectful and which ensures that students feel valued and cared for, have meaningful opportunities to contribute to the school and can effectively engage with their learning.

- To recognise and respond to the diverse needs of students, accommodating different learning profiles and rates of learning and to intervene early to identify and respond to these needs.
- To promote an understanding of the link between student wellbeing and student learning outcomes.
- To acknowledge that staff, particularly teachers, are a vital source of support and determinants of student success.
- To ensure all members of the school community are aware of their obligations

### **Implementation:**

- A school profile which reflects the diversity of the school community will be developed in conjunction with the school's strategic plan.
- The school will collaboratively develop and implement a fair and respectful whole-school engagement and behaviour management approach. This will include programs and strategies identified by the school community and put into practice to enhance student engagement and wellbeing.
- The rights and responsibilities of all members of the school community will be agreed to, clearly defined and displayed.
- Expectations shared by the Principal, teachers, school staff, students and parents /carers will be listed and displayed/included in teacher, parent handbooks and included in the school newsletter.
- This policy is informed by the Department of Education and Training Student Engagement and inclusion Guidance available at [www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/participation/Pages/studentengagementguidance.aspx](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/participation/Pages/studentengagementguidance.aspx)

### **Related policies and procedures:**

- Anti-bullying Policy
- Child Safety Policy
- Internet Acceptable use agreement
- School-wide positive behaviour support documentation

### **Evaluation:**

- The policy will be reviewed periodically to reflect the School Strategic plan or more often if necessary due to changes in regulations or circumstances.
- The school will monitor student engagement and wellbeing through data such as that provided by parent and staff opinion surveys and incident reports. It will consider issues raised through these, and any other relevant information from them when undertaking a review of the school's policy, procedures and strategies.
- The school community will regularly review its student engagement policy and procedures as part of its cyclic policy and procedures review schedule.

**Ratified by School Council: 11/11/09**  
**Last Reviewed: March 2018**

## **SECTION 1: SCHOOL PROFILE**

- Dandenong Valley SDS is a specialist school serving the needs of students aged from pre-school (2.8 - 4.8) to 18 years, with moderate to severe intellectual disabilities including physical, sensory, behavioural, medical and communication disabilities.
- Situated in the SE growth corridor, one of the fastest growing areas of Melbourne the school has a growing enrolment of approximately 220 (EFT) plus 38 Early Education students in 2016. Seventy percent of these students are male.
- The school caters for a population of approx. 206 families (including Early Education families). Of these 51% have diverse racial, ethnic and religious backgrounds, 35% list English as a second language, 5.5 % are from migrant/refugee families
- Two families list themselves as being of Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islanders descent.
- Currently there are two students in out-of-home care
- The school is aware of one student who identifies as gay,

### **Environment - Grounds and Facilities**

- The school was purpose built in 1989 and comprised a brick core building of 6 classrooms, multipurpose room, laundry and administration area plus 2 relocatable buildings. Upgrades in 2004, the addition of extra portables and more recent upgrades sees the school with 30 classrooms, (6 core & portables) a sensory room, resource room & paramedical offices in addition to established laundry and multipurpose rooms.
- Located between Fountain Gate Secondary College and Fountain Gate Primary School, it is well established within the Kevin Heinze Sensory Garden with courtyards, a hydro therapy pool and exceptional playground facilities set out in junior and senior areas. The junior school playground was redeveloped in 2009.
- Works under Building the Education Revolution added a Multipurpose building at the front of the school which houses the Transition program for our oldest students, a multipurpose room, a conference room and a homecraft centre.

### **Educational**

- Dandenong Valley SDS provides a range of individual programs for students with disabilities.
- The Victorian Curriculum forms the basis for curriculum planning, assessment and reporting processes and procedures.
- Staff who implement this curriculum and other programs include Early Education teachers, specialist PMP teacher, specialist music teacher, specialist art teacher, specialist PE teacher, classroom teachers, assistants, a physiotherapist, music therapists, speech therapists and occupational therapists as well as hydrotherapy staff including a manager/lifeguard and part-time assistants.
- Accreditation in Performance and Development Culture was achieved in 2007.
- The principles of learning and teaching (POLT) and our demonstration of these principles have been assessed and strategies put in place for continuous improvement. (see School Strategic Plan).
- The E5 model has been introduced and strategies put in place

## **SECTION 2: WHOLE-SCHOOL PREVENTION**

Dandenong Valley SDS aims to improve student engagement and well being by implementing programs designed to promote students' participation, social skills and behaviours. As well as monitoring class sizes and staffing, particular focus will be placed on improving student behaviour

in the class and school. In 2014 the school adopted the School-Wide Positive Behaviour Support Framework for supporting and promoting a positive school culture. .

### **Environment - Grounds & Facilities:**

Provision of safe, supportive, stimulating learning environments accessible by all:

- Stimulating purpose built playground areas
- Establishment of well resourced sensory room with documentation of resource materials and professional development provided to improve student participation.
- Well maintained and presented buildings and grounds.
- Active OH&S representatives and committee ensure a safe school, with well maintained facilities and with all compliance requirements met.
- Purpose built courtyards

### **Cultures and Values:**

Establishing shared values and attitudes which support the engagement of students and maintenance of their well being:

- School Values: Integrity, Respect and Responsibility
- School rules:
  - Be Respectful
  - Be Responsible
  - Be Safe
  - Be a Learner
- Explicit teaching of behavioural expectations relating to school rules.
- Acknowledgement and rewarding of effort and excellence through praise, stickers, newsletters, certificates, Principal's awards etc.
- The respect and valuing of all members of the school community is reflected in approaches and policies.
- All staff complete online professional development in Harassment and Equal Opportunity
- All staff complete performance plans and annual reviews.

### **Education:**

Acknowledging and accommodating students as individual learners by identifying & catering for individual needs, learning styles, interests & access requirements:

- Implementing the Principles of Learning and Teaching.
- Establishing individual learning goals for students through a team approach which includes parents, teacher and therapists.
- Providing diverse programs including swimming, camps, PMP, community access, walking, therapies, travel training and electives
- Providing programs which support transition including supported employment, electives, and community access.
- Providing augmentative communication systems including signing, PECS, activity schedules, low and hi-tech communication devices.
- Providing a meaningful & appropriate curriculum which incorporates reporting and assessment, planning and delivery.
- Implementing appropriate and varied teaching strategies.

- Implementing a Personal Safety Program.
- Creating and implementing opportunities for increased student participation in decision-making: appointment of student leaders for each section of the school and student participation in the Kids Conference and Cluster Soiree.

### **Health & Wellbeing:**

Providing programs and policies which support student health & wellbeing including:

- Medical training to support specific students.
- First aid training for all staff.
- Visiting teachers.
- Walking programs.
- Programs established under the Go For Your Life initiative.
- Asthma, Epilepsy, Anaphylaxis management plans.
- Development of individual Student Safety plans.
- Establishment of behaviour management support groups.(Team around the child)
- Sensory programs.
- Sharing information to support student health/ wellbeing eg via newsletter.

### **Relationships with parents:**

The School values parent / carer input into its operations and curriculum offerings and seeks feedback through the Parent Opinion survey and from parent representatives on School Council. The School provides encouragement to the Parents' support group in our efforts to build a sense of community. The school supports families to engage in their students' learning and build their capacity as active learners. It provides an environment that welcomes all parents/carers and is responsive to them as partners in learning. The school creates successful partnerships with parents/carers and families by:

- ensuring all parents/carers are aware of the school's Student Engagement Policy
- conducting effective school-to-home and home-to-school communications
- involving families as participants in school decision-making
- coordinating resources and services from the community for families, students and the school
- welcoming families to whole-school activities such as sports days or school concerts
- involving families in Student Support Groups

### **Resources:**

Providing physical and human resources which support the engagement of students and maintenance of their well being:

- High staff to student ratio,
- Extra assistance where required.
- Broad range of teaching and learning resources.
- ICT resources including high student to computer ratio, interactive screens in all classrooms, a variety of access peripherals and devices, a broad range of software & sets of ipads for use in classrooms.

- Therapists including speech therapists, occupational therapists, physiotherapists and music therapists.
- Professional development for all staff.
- Volunteers.

### **SECTION 3: RIGHTS & RESPONSIBILITIES**

- All members of the public and our school community have the right to feel safe and welcomed in our school.
- Our students, their parents/carers and our staff will treat each other with dignity and respect at all times.
- Bullying (& cyberbullying) by or of any member of the school community will not be tolerated and steps will be taken according to DET *Safe Schools are Effective Schools*, the school's Anti Bullying policy its Internet Codes of Conduct and the Child Safety Policy.
- Access to school areas and facilities shall not be restricted by physical disability and all means will be taken to facilitate access.
- All students will have access to, and participate in a full, relevant and challenging curriculum.
- The school, in its teaching and learning programs will acknowledge and value diversity and support this with appropriate curriculum, pedagogy and assessment practices.
- All students have a right to learn and all have a responsibility to allow others to get the most benefit from learning experiences.

### **SECTION 4: SHARED EXPECTATIONS**

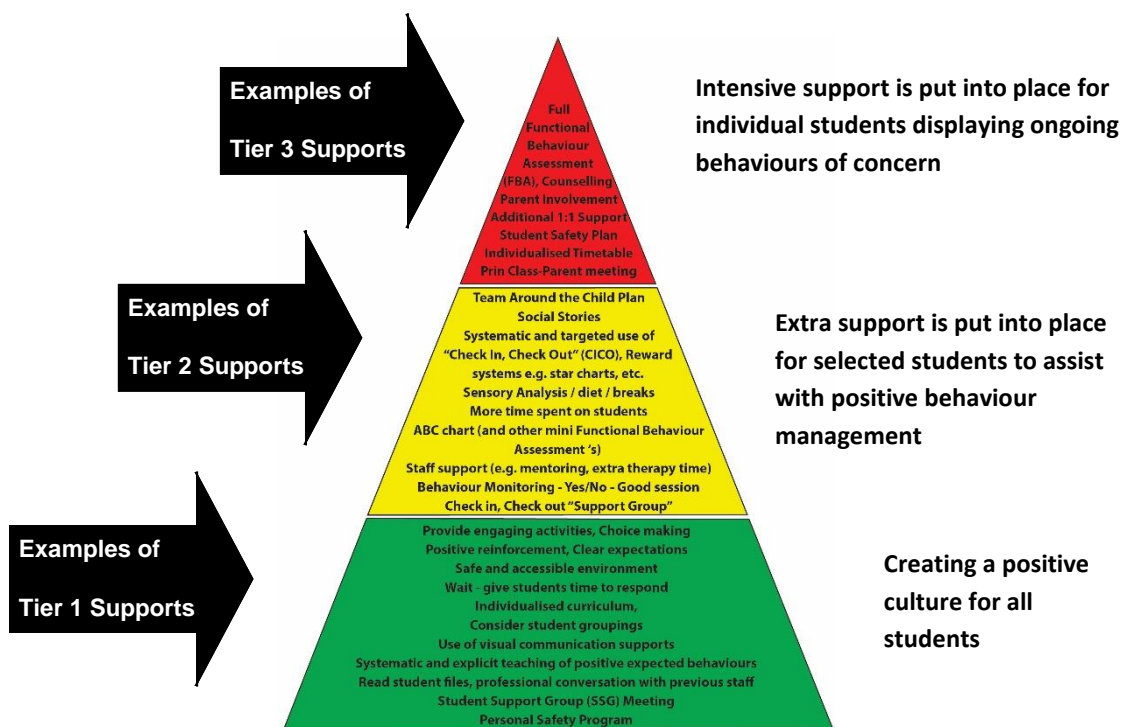
	<b>Students</b>	<b>Parents/Carers</b>	<b>Principals/Teachers &amp; Staff</b>
<b>Engagement (participation in the classroom and other school activities)</b>	Demonstrate: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>preparedness</b> to engage in and take full advantage of the school program</li> <li>• <b>effort</b> to do their very best</li> <li>• <b>self-discipline</b> to ensure a cooperative learning environment and model the school values</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promote positive outcomes by valuing the importance of education and liaising with the school on their child's progress/needs</li> <li>• Support their child in their preparedness for the school day and in the provision of a supportive home environment</li> <li>• Monitor their child's school involvement and progress and communicate with the school when necessary</li> <li>• Are informed and supportive of school programs and actively</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The school will comply with its duty of care obligations and have a responsibility to provide an educational environment that can effectively engage all students</li> <li>• The school will provide appropriate, relevant and challenging curriculum that gives students the opportunity to have input into their learning and experience success</li> </ul>

		participate in school events/parent groups	
<b>Attendance</b>	<p>All students are expected to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>attend and be punctual every day that the school is open to students</li> <li>be prepared to participate fully in lessons</li> </ul>	<p>Parents/Carers are expected to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ensure that their child's enrolment details are correct</li> <li>ensure their child attends regularly</li> <li>advise the school as soon as possible when a child is absent</li> <li>account for all student absences</li> <li>keep family holidays within scheduled school holidays</li> <li>Support their child's learning during absences and work with the school to reintegrate students after prolonged absences</li> </ul>	<p>In accordance with legislation released March 1, 2014 and with DET procedures the school will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Proactively promote regular attendance</li> <li>mark rolls accurately each day</li> <li>follow up on any unexplained absences promptly and consistently</li> <li>Identify trends via data analysis</li> <li>Report attendance data in the school's Annual Report</li> <li>Support students whose attendance is problematic by developing 'Return to School' plans and working with families to implement individual strategies</li> </ul>
<b>Behaviour</b>	<p>Students are expected to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>model the schools core values</li> <li>always treat others with respect.</li> <li>never physically or verbally abuse others.</li> <li>take responsibility for their behaviour and its impact on others</li> <li>obey all reasonable requests of staff.</li> <li>respect the rights of others to learn. No student has the right to impact on the learning of others.</li> <li>respect the property of others.</li> </ul>	<p>Parents/Carers are expected to :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>have high expectations of their child's behaviour and an understanding of the schools behavioural expectations</li> <li>Communicate with the school regarding their child's circumstances</li> <li>Cooperate with the school by assisting in the development and enforcement of strategies to address individual needs</li> </ul>	<p>The school will deliver an inclusive and comprehensive curriculum which promotes positive behaviours and emphasises the well being of every child</p> <p>The school will employ whole school and classroom practices to establish a climate in which appropriate behaviour is the norm for all students and focus on the implementation of preventative and early intervention strategies to deal with attendance and behavioural issues</p> <p>The school will consistently apply its Behavioural Policy through a shared collegiate understanding and only exclude students in extreme circumstances.</p> <p>The school recognises that for some students additional support may be needed in the form of staged responses and is committed to working with families to reintegrate students after exclusion</p>

## SECTION 5: SCHOOL ACTIONS/CONSEQUENCES

The SWPBS framework has been adopted at Dandenong Valley to support and promote a positive school culture.

### Continuum of Behaviour Support



The school recognises the importance of promoting student engagement and positive behaviours to maximise student learning and wellbeing.

It recognises the need to ensure strategies are in place to firstly prevent disengagement, but when occurring, to identify and intervene at a whole school and individual level as early as possible.

In determining actions and consequences of inappropriate behaviours, the school will take the following into consideration:

- that emphasis is placed upon rewarding positive behaviours and attitudes.
- that a staged response will be implemented when shared expectations are not met.
- that the staged response should have a prevention/early intervention focus.
- that data is taken into account when determining actions and consequences.
- that all actions and consequences for inappropriate behaviour should have a clearly defined educational outcome.
- that behavioural plans will be developed in consultation with the Principal
- that Corporal Punishment is prohibited in all Victorian schools. Corporal punishment must NOT be used at the School under any circumstances.
- That suspension and expulsion are measures of last resort and may only be applied when the grounds for suspension and expulsion set out in the Engagement and Inclusion Guidance have been met.



- That suspension and expulsion can only be approved by the principal and the school will follow the processes for applying these disciplinary measures set out in the Student Engagement and Inclusion Guidance.

Information on grounds and processes for suspension and expulsion that our school will follow are available here:

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/participation/Pages/discipline.aspx>

### **Staged Response Checklist for Student Engagement**

<b>Stage 1 Prevention and early Intervention- creating a positive culture</b>	
<b>Suggested Strategies</b>	<b>School Actions</b>
Define & teach school wide expectations for all.	Establishment and implementation of : School Values. Staff and Student Codes of Conduct School and Class Rules Modelling behavioural expectations Curriculum- eg Personal & Social Learning Principles Of Learning and Teaching Anti Bullying, Anti discrimination, Equal Opportunity Professional Development
Establish relevant school wide prevention programs .	SWPBS Personal Safety Program Resource management processes- Provision of staff, facilities / equipment aimed at facilitating and supporting engagement. Class and Staffing processes. Positive Reinforcement provided multifaceted approach and forums. Student Profiles (personal & academic) Team Approach to Goal Setting. Development of social competencies. Development of decision making. Provision of extracurricular activities. Transition programs Student Department Representative Team Teach Australia Parent support through specific parenting programs & workshops. Information dissemination through fliers, newsletters, communication books, meetings, and phone calls Provision of therapies: speech, occupational, music and physiotherapy.
Establish consistent school wide processes to identify students at risk of disengagement from learning.	Educational Needs Assessments Transition Processes. Program Support Group Meetings Team Approach to Goal Setting. Student Profiles (personal & academic) Behaviour management processes.
Establish consistent school wide processes and programs for early intervention.	Establishing and implementing programs and processes which foster student engagement: Student Profile Development Individual Program Planning Curriculum planning Transition processes Program Budgeting Team Planning Music Playgroup Early Education Program Provision of resources for strategies for dealing with challenging behaviours.

<b>Stage 2: Intervention: a targeted response for selected 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.	Develop Student Profiles. Collect & collate information for student files & communication records. Maintain communication systems, including parent teacher meetings, phone contact, communication books. Review Census information Implement Principle one of POLT.
Establish data collection strategies.	Routine assessment & reporting. Student Assessment Folders Student files (May incorporate anecdotal records, checklists, behaviour diaries, star charts) Regular SSG Meetings Team Approach to Goal setting Communication Records Team Around the Child process Functional behaviour analysis
Develop the plan for improvement based on data and review regularly.	Team approach to Student Safety plan development. Maintain behaviour diary. Establish routine review periods.
Explicitly teach and/or build replacement behaviours.	Individual Education plan Social competency activities , Utilise Transporter DVD/Social skills software Social Stories Social scripts Staff model appropriate behaviours
Determine strategies for the monitoring and measurement of student progress.	Establish Student Safety Plan incorporating review & assessment plans Assess students at beginning & throughout year to monitor improvement. Identify key engagement & behavioural indicators.
Establish inclusive and consistent classroom strategies.	Student Safety plans- shared with all staff Reward systems- class & school ( eg playground treasure tickets) Communicate strategies to all staff involved with student. Display plan.
Establish out of class support strategies.	Utilise psychologist and other specialists as deemed appropriate. Refer to outside agencies. Sharing Student Safety Plan information Yard duty processes and arrangements including key tags with information on specific student needs & strategies, students identified for additional support & timetabling and regular information sharing at staff meetings.
Establish a student support group.	Parent support group. Buddy system - seniors helping to engage others. Big Brother Big sister Program