STUDENT WELLBEING AND ENGAGEMENT POLICY DON VALLEY PS 2024



Help for non-English speakers

If you need help to understand the information in this policy please contact Don Valley PS 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.

Don Valley 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, 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.

CONTENTS

1. School profile
2. School values, philosophy and vision
3. Wellbeing and engagement strategies
4. Identifying students in need of support
5. Student rights and responsibilities
6. Student behavioural expectations
7. Engaging with families
8. Evaluation

POLICY

1. School profile
2. Don Valley Primary School is located in the semi-rural community of Don Valley. Don Valley is a couple of kilometres from the Warburton Highway. There are no shops or public

transport to service the area. As the school is the only major facility and public space in Don Valley it is in many ways the hub of the community.

We are a small school, currently with 37 enrolments. In addition to meeting the needs of local families our school also attracts students from the wider Upper Yarra Valley area including a high percentage of students with specific learning needs, and students from families who feel that a small school will be the best environment for their child. Over the last few years, we have also had a significant proportion of students from Koori background. We pride ourselves on the inclusive and caring culture of our school.

3. School values, philosophy and vision

Don Valley Primary School's vision is to deliver a quality teaching and learning program which will nurture the individual's life-long love of learning and contribution to the wider community.

Our statement of values and school philosophy is the foundation of our school community. The values underpin our student behaviour expectations and are voiced, acted upon and reinforced at every opportunity.

Don Valley PS Values

Respect:

- Treat everyone with courtesy, respect and fairness.
- Follow the rules.

Kindness and Inclusiveness:

- Treat others as you would like them to treat you.
- Everyone has the right to feel and be safe.

Responsibility:

- Behave in a responsible manner towards others and the environment.
- Take responsibility for your own actions.

Learning:

- Pursue your personal best
- Be brave and participate
- Be persistent
- Listen attentively

4. Wellbeing and engagement strategies

Don Valley PS has 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

- *creating a culture that is inclusive, engaging, connected and supportive*
- *welcoming all parents/carers and being responsive to them as partners in learning*
- *providing opportunities for student voice and agency. Purposefully building student capacity for increased agency and leadership.*
- *differentiated learning and multi-age programs*
- provide a varied learning program that enables students to pursue their own interests and become self-motivated learners through the development of specific skills, student agency and inquiry.
- inclusion of activities and experiences in the program to boost student engagement.
- differentiated learning program that enables students to develop skills and to set and achieve personal learning goals.
- whole school approach to supporting all students to achieve their personal best in literacy and numeracy while also celebrating curriculum and learning opportunities in the creative arts, STEM, challenge based learning, physical education, IT and environmental activities.
- providing a range of opportunities for students to be involved, have ownership and feel connected to the community.
- stimulating Out-of School Hours program..
- *high and consistent expectations of all staff, students and parents and carers*
- *prioritise positive relationships between staff and students, recognising the fundamental role this plays in building and sustaining student wellbeing*
- *teachers at Don Valley PS school adopt a broad range of teaching and assessment approaches to effectively respond to the diverse learning styles, strengths and needs of our students.*
- *our school's Statement of Values are 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 including a buddy program for foundation students*
- *positive behaviour and student achievement is acknowledged and celebrated in the classroom school assemblies and communication to parents*
- *monitor student attendance and implement attendance improvement strategies at a whole-school, cohort and individual level*
- *we have a wellbeing dog program under the training and subscription to Dogs Connect*
- *students are supported by our Wellbeing Team which includes our Mental Health Leader, Wellbeing Officer and Principal.*
  student wellbeing is a weekly item for each staff briefing and is prioritised for a minimum of two staff meeting/PL sessions a term.
- *we engage in school wide positive behaviour support with our staff and students, which includes programs such as:*
    - *Respectful Relationships*
    - *Safe Schools*
    - *You Can Do It*
    - *My World/Our World*

Targeted

- intervening early to identify/respond to student needs for academic, social or emotional support. A commitment to providing individualised and small group support and programs to meet student needs. This includes providing support through intervention programs, IEPs, Mental Health Program and Student Wellbeing support.
- *Koorie students are supported to engage fully in their education, in a positive learning environment that understands and appreciates the strength of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture. IEPs and SSG meetings for all Koori students and engagement with the Koori Engagement Support Officer, programs and initiatives including the Marrung Initiative and school Marrung leadership.*
- *staff will undertake health promotion and social skills development in response to needs identified by student wellbeing data, classroom teachers or other school staff each year*
- *staff will apply a trauma-informed approach to working with students who have experienced trauma*
- *we provide a positive and respectful learning environment for our students who identify as LGBTIQ+ and follow the Department's policy on LGBTIQ + students*
- *all students in Out of Home Care are supported in accordance with the Department's policy on Supporting Students in Out-of-Home Care including being appointed a Learning Mentor, having an Individual Learning Plan and a Student Support Group (SSG) and being referred to Student Support Services for an Educational Needs Assessment*
- *students with a disability are supported to be able to engage fully in their learning and school activities in accordance with the Department's policy on Students with Disability, such as through reasonable adjustments to support access to learning programs, consultation with families and where required, student support groups and individual education plans*
- *wellbeing staff will undertake health promotion and social skills development in response to needs identified by student wellbeing data, classroom teachers or other school staff each year*
- *staff will apply a trauma-informed approach to working with students who have experienced trauma*

Individual

Don Valley Primary School 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*
- *attendance plan*
- *developing an Individual Education Plan and/or a Behaviour Support Plan*
- *considering if any environmental changes need to be made, for example changing the classroom set up*
- *referring the student to:*
    - *school-based wellbeing supports*
    - *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 and 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*
- *running regular Student Support Group meetings for all students:*
    - *with a disability*
    - *in Out of Home Care*
    - *and with other complex needs that require ongoing support and monitoring.*

Links

- *Student Support Groups*
- *Individual Education Plans*
- *Behaviour - Students*
- *Behaviour Support Plans*
- *Student Support Services*
- Program for Students with Disabilities
- *Mental health toolkit*
- *Headspace*

5. Identifying students in need of support

Don Valley PS is committed to providing the necessary support to ensure our students are supported intellectually, emotionally and socially. The Student Wellbeing team, together with a whole staff approach play a significant role in developing and implementing strategies help identify students in need of support and enhance student wellbeing. Don Valley 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*

6. 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:

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

7. Student behavioural expectations

All students are expected to follow the school code of conduct:

Be a Learner	**✓Follow instructions** **✓Do your best** **✓Be brave-participate** **✓Be a team player** **✓Listen attentively**
Be Respectful	**✓Be sensible** **✓Be fair** **✓Speak politely to everyone-use appropriate language** **✓Be honest** **✓Care for the school environment** **✓Be generous and kind to everyone**

Be Safe	✓Follow the school rules ✓Follow Instructions the first time ✓Keep your hands and feet to yourself ✓Move sensibly and safely ✓Use the "STOP" strategy first if there is a problem ✓Report unsolved problems to the teachers

Behavioural expectations of students, staff and families are grounded in our school's Statement of Values and our Behavioural Expectations. 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. Student bullying behaviour will be responded to consistently with DVPS's School's Bullying policy.

When a student acts in breach of the behaviour standards of our school community, DVPS 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 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*
- *an opportunity for the student to self-regulate their behaviour when appropriate*
- *teacher controlled consequences such as moving a student in a classroom or other reasonable and proportionate responses to misbehaviour*
- *withdrawal of privileges*
- *referral to the Principal*
- *restorative practices*
- *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, available at:

- https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/suspensions/policy
- https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/expulsions/policy
- https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/restraint-seclusion/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 Don Valley PS 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.

8. Engaging with families

Don Valley 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 or on request from the office
- maintaining an open, respectful line of communication between parents and staff, utilising a variety of opportunities to engage with families
- providing parent volunteer opportunities so that families can contribute to school activities
- involving families with curriculum-related activities
- involving families in school decision making
- coordinating resources and services from the community for families
- including families in Student Support Groups, and developing individual plans for students.
- making connections with families through the Student Wellbeing Officer
- celebrating and informing families of school activities through our school Facebook page

9. Evaluation

Don Valley 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 survey data
- staff observational reports and records
- school reports
- parent survey
- case management
- SOCS
- incidents data
- school reports
- parent survey
- case management
- CASES21, including attendance data
- SOCS

COMMUNICATION

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

- Available publicly on our school's website
- Included in staff induction processes
- Made available from school administration upon request

Our school will also ensure it follows the mandatory parent/carer 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

The following school policies are also relevant to this Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy:

- Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy
- Bullying Prevention Policy
- Inclusion and Diversity Policy
- Statement of Values and School Philosophy

POLICY REVIEW AND APPROVAL

Policy last reviewed	21-8-24
Consultation	School staff 26-8-24 School Council 28-8-24
Approved by	Principal
Next scheduled review date	August 2026