

Dandenong West Primary School

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STUDENT ENGAGEMENT POLICY

Our vision is to inspire a passion for learning that motivates us to live life with enthusiasm and a positive attitude.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that all students and members of our school community at Dandenong West Primary School 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.
- (e) Our school's commitment to prohibit corporal punishment

Dandenong West Primary School 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.

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1. School profile
2. School values, philosophy and vision
3. Engagement strategies
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5. Student rights and responsibilities
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8. Evaluation

POLICY

1. Corporal Punishment

Corporal punishment is prohibited in all Victorian schools. Corporal punishment must NOT be used at the School under any circumstances.

2. School profile

Dandenong West Primary School was built in 1925 and is located approximately 40 kilometres south east of Melbourne CBD. Over this time the demographics have changed considerably. What started as an Anglo saxon has now become a thriving community of diverse cultures. It is a place of first residence for many new arrivals to Australia.

As a result, the enrolment characteristics of the school change as the pattern of immigration alters. For many of our families, Dandenong West is their first exposure to education. Many of our families have high expectations of their children at school, as an important team on the road to the 'immigrant dream'. Approximately, a third of our school according to enrolment information are 'likely to be refugees'.

The most recent census reports indicate that Dandenong is the most disadvantaged municipality in Victoria. There is high unemployment among families of the school. As expected in an area of such high unemployment there are some families within the school community who have experienced inter-generational poverty. The challenges facing these families include maintaining regular attendance at school and punctual arrival at school.

Within our population:

- The proportion of students who have a Language Background Other Than English is approximately 96%.
- Our last census we have 17 (5.5%) students who mainly speak English at home.
- The number of languages spoken is 47 (15%) including English.
- The gender breakdown is 51% males and 49% females. (153 f and 163 m)
- one indigenous family enrolled at Dandenong West.

Our goal is to develop students' personal and social learning skills which will enable them to be successful, confident and tolerant individuals, able to contribute positively to society. We focus strongly on maintaining and fostering our school as a learning community, which values interaction between and contribution from students, parents, teachers and the wider community through:

- providing an environment that is safe and secure
- facilitating effective communication to foster a strong partnership within the school
- providing equal opportunity for all members of the school community
- providing regular professional development for staff
- valuing and facilitating academic excellence
- supporting students to attain their individual potential by building on their strengths
- encouraging, recognising and rewarding achievement and effort
- developing in students such qualities and social skills as tolerance, responsibility, communication, independence, problem solving, creativity and respect
- providing and fostering a cooperative environment where students can share the responsibility for their own learning, behaviour and health

The school is working in an ongoing capacity with Foundation House and Tom Brunzell and the team at Berry Street (BSEM), with trauma informed and wellbeing practices that enable students' academic and personal growth. Our teachers are equipped with a tool-kit of activities, ideas and strategies enhancing a teaching style of versatility, reflection, confidence and authenticity.

3. School values, philosophy and vision

Dandenong West Primary School provides a pro-social school culture that promotes positive relationships across the entire school community. The school core values of Honesty, Empathy, positive Attitude, Respect and Tolerance are fundamental to these relationships.

- **Honesty** – at Dandenong West we tell the truth
- **Empathy** – at Dandenong West we look after each other and our environment
- **Attitude** – at Dandenong West we always try to do our best and have a positive attitude
- **Respect** – at Dandenong West we show respect for diversity
- **Tolerance** – at Dandenong West we accept that everyone is entitled to their own ideas

The foundation of our positive school culture is the active participation of all members of the school community, so they feel valued, safe and secure. A key component of the school's approach is to allow every person to operate at their optimum level by:

- Feeling safe from verbal, physical or cyber conduct that is uninvited and/or intimidating
- Developing strategies and practices that address bullying/harassing and inappropriate behaviour which includes cyber-bullying

The Wellbeing and Leadership Teams regularly consult with students, teachers and parents/carers to ensure that we are responsive to the students' social, emotional, cognitive and cultural needs.

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4. Engagement strategies

Dandenong West Primary School 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.

Effective teaching, inclusive and engaging curriculum and respectful relationships between staff and students continue to be a focus through professional learning. A key component of the school's approach to prevention is teaching positive behaviours and the use of logical consequences to address both appropriate and inappropriate behaviour.

Our Student Wellbeing focus, is that of our School Vision: to inspire a passion for learning that motivates us to live life with enthusiasm and a positive attitude.

At the beginning of the school year all classes start with establishing a classroom culture of respect, co-operation and positive relationships. This supports our whole school Behaviours and Expectations which provides a clear, consistent approach. Each student engages with the Student Code of Conduct in a child-centred, developmentally appropriate, learning environment that recognises, fosters and promotes the intellectual, social, emotional and physical development of each child. We understand that many children have unique wellbeing and learning needs and we are committed to addressing these needs.

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 level assessment data
- teachers at Dandenong West Primary School use DWPS 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 Dandenong West Primary school 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 HEART 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
- Ready for School/Transition teams have carefully planned the Foundation and 6/7 Transition programs to support students moving into different stages of their schooling
- Berry Street positive behaviour and student achievement is acknowledged in the classroom, and formally in school assemblies and communication to parents
- The attendance team 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 Student Representative Council and other forums including year group meetings and Peer Support Groups. Students are also encouraged to speak with their teachers, Year Level Leader, Wellbeing team, Assistant Principal and Principal whenever they have any questions or concerns.
- Create opportunities for cross—age connections amongst students through choir, LEGO club, athletics and peer support programs, lunch time social clubs and after school sport programs
- All students are welcome to self-refer to the Student Wellbeing Leader, Youth Worker, Year Group Leaders, 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:
 - Berry Street
 - Restorative Practices
 - 4Rs
 - Circle time
 - Bounce Back / Social Stories
 - Brain breaks
- programs, incursions and excursions developed to address issue specific behaviour (i.e. anger management programs)
- opportunities for student inclusion (i.e. sports teams, clubs, recess and lunchtime activities Chill Out, choir, Boys Group, Girl Guides, Social Skills group)
- buddy programs, peers support programs

Targeted

Each term (or needs based) the Wellbeing team complete an 'At Risk' to identify and monitor the health and wellbeing of students and, act as a point of contact for students who may need additional support

- each team meeting, all teams will identify any students who may require additional support and report (email) to the Wellbeing team
- all students from P-2 will be assisted to develop a classroom Ready to Learn Plan, with targeted goals and support to plan to enable a student to de-escalate and become ready to learn
- all students from 3-6 will be assisted to develop an Individual Ready to learn Plan, with targeted goals and support to plan to enable a student to de-escalate and become ready to learn
- ensure all Koorie students have a Koorie Individual Plan
- all students in Out of Home Care will be appointed a Learning Mentor, have an Individual Learning Plan and will be referred to Student Support Services for an Educational Needs Assessment
- wellbeing staff along with the B-Alt team will undertake health promotion and social skills development in response to needs identified by student wellbeing data, classroom teachers or school staff or families/caregivers
- staff will apply a trauma-informed approach to working with students who have experienced trauma. Training by Foundation House and Berry Street Education Model.
- Intervention groups will be trialled in Term 1, targeting a number of students who may require extra support in health and wellbeing.

Individual

- Student Support Groups, see:
 - <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/participation/pages/supportgroups.aspx>
 - <https://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/teachers/learningneeds/Pages/psdhandbook.aspx>
- Personal Learning Plan and Behaviour Support Plan
- Program for Students with Disabilities
- referral to Student Welfare Coordinator and Student Support Services
- referral to ChildFirst, Headspace, REACH
- Lookout
- Speech Pathologist and Speech Pathologist Monash University Students based at DWPS

- Foundation House
http://www.foundationhouse.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/VFST_Form_Referral_Schools_v04-interactive.pdf
- Refugee Program Monash Health
- building constructive relationships with students at risk or students who are vulnerable due to complex individual circumstances. Wellbeing will communicate needs and strategies needed with team involved with student e.g. teacher, ES member, specialists, intervention teacher
- teacher will initiate 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
- 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
 - Re-engagement programs such as Navigator (school to trial with new Wellbeing team Term 1)

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. Attendance officer to work alongside teacher and 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
 - students with chronic attendance
<https://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/teachers/studentmanagement/attendance/Pages/default.aspx> .

5. Identifying students in need of support

Dandenong West Primary School is committed to providing the necessary support to ensure our students are supported intellectually, emotionally and socially. The Student Wellbeing team plays a significant role in developing and implementing strategies to help identify students in need of support and enhance student wellbeing. Dandenong West Primary School 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 during Reception and while the student and family are enrolled
- attendance records
- academic performance

- observations by school staff such as changes in engagement, behaviour, self-care, social connectedness and motivation
- attendance, Wellbeing referrals and suspension data
- engagement with families
- self-referrals or referrals from peers
- referrals from teachers/staff/caregivers
- referrals from paediatrician or child services (DHHS)

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, 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.

7. Student behavioural expectations

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

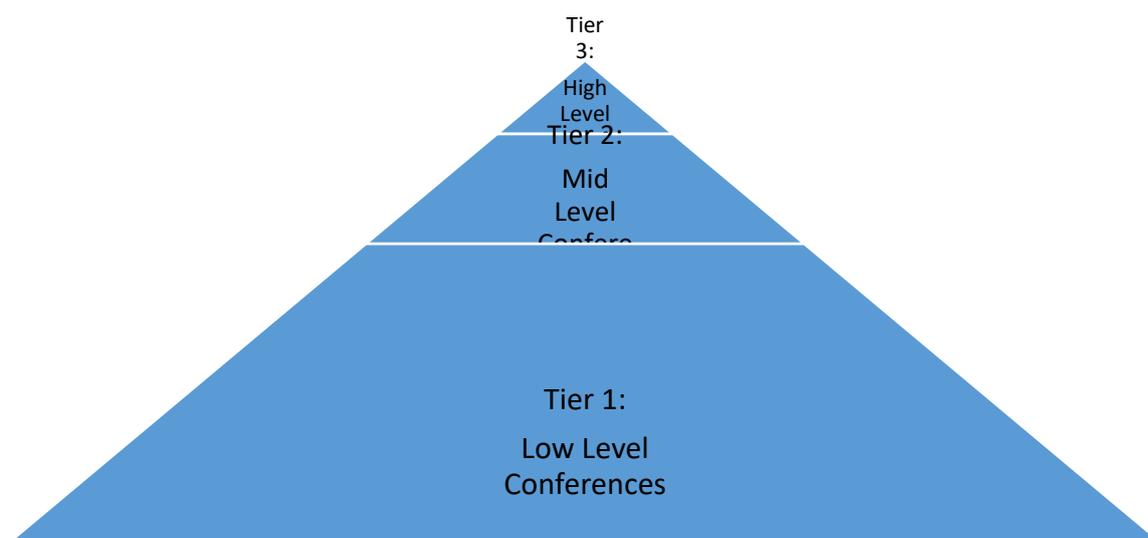
When a student acts in breach of the behaviour standards of our school community, Dandenong West Primary School will institute a staged response, consistent with the Department's Student Engagement and Inclusion Guidelines. Where appropriate, parents will be informed about the inappropriate behaviour 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
- withdrawal of privileges
- referral to the Year Level Coordinator
- restorative practices
- detentions
- behaviour reviews
- suspension
- expulsion

Levels of Restorative Conferencing at Dandenong West Primary



Tier 1:

- Deals with relatively minor incidents
- Can be conducted in the classroom, playground and corridor
- Can be conducted by a teacher or student
- Based on the restorative questions
- Ends with an informal agreement between those affected

Tier 2:

- Deals with moderately serious incidents
- Can be facilitated by class teacher, and/ or senior staff
- Follows the 5 restorative questions
- Everyone has an opportunity to explain how the incident affected them
- Written record is kept
- Resolution / agreement to restore the harm caused
- Repairing the harm – agreed actions are carried out
- Reflection process, if appropriate
- Parents to be contacted, particularly if there have been ongoing behaviour issues

Tier 3:

- Deals with serious issues
- Is conducted by a trained member of senior staff or facilitator
- Involves everyone affected by the incident and may also involve others to provide support e.g. parents, school psychologist, teacher, etc.
- Follows the 5 restorative questions. May require a scripted framework for formal conferences dealing with very serious incidents
- Written record of conference, giving everyone an opportunity to explain how the incident affected them
- An agreed action plan or formal agreement is decided upon to repair harm and support behaviour change
- Formal agreement or action plan that is monitored by a senior staff member

Parents will be contacted by a member of senior staff and may be asked to attend a meeting or a formal conference

All staff are expected to follow the 4Rs process:

Reminder

Redirection

Response

Reflection

Internal and External Suspension

We aim to keep students connected to school at all times, however, in extreme cases where there has been a very high level breach of safety to another student or staff member, appropriate sanctions may include internal or external suspensions. A formal restorative exit and re-entry process with both student and parents would need to be undertaken in this case.

Suspension and expulsion are measures of last resort and may only be used in particular situations consistent with Department policy, available at:

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/participation/pages/engagement.aspx>

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

8. Engaging with families

Dandenong West Primary School 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, supported by our Communicating with School Staff policy.
- 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
- coordinating resources and services from the community for families
- including families in Student Support Groups, and developing individual plans for students.

Parents have the right to:

- know that their children are in a safe, happy learning environment where they are treated fairly with respect
- Expect a positive and supportive approach to their child's learning
- Expect communication and participation in their child's education and learning

Parent share a responsibility to:

- Build a positive relationship with members of the school community
- Ensure students attend school and have the appropriate learning materials
- Promote positive educational outcomes for their children by taking an active interest in their child's educational progress

Support the school in maintaining a safe and respectful learning environment for all students

9. Evaluation

Dandenong West Primary 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
- incidents data
- school reports
- parent survey
- case management
- CASES21
- SOCS

FURTHER INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

Dandenong West Primary School's Student Welfare Policies support student wellbeing across the school so that the academic and social needs of students are met through teaching and learning programs that support each student. These policies are the basis on which the happiness and success of students at school relies.

There are a number of policies in addition to the Student Engagement Policy that are relevant to student wellbeing. They include:

1. Anti-Bullying Policy
2. Attendance Policy
3. Child Protection – Mandatory Reporting Policy
4. Student use of Mobile Communication Devices
5. Student Support Groups
6. Suspension Policy
7. Expulsion Policy
8. Inclusion Policy

REVIEW CYCLE

This policy was last updated on January 2019, and is scheduled for review in January 2021