

STUDENT WELLBEING AND ENGAGEMENT POLICY

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.

Officer Specialist 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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POLICY

1. School profile

Officer Specialist School is a new, multi-mode, government funded, specialist school situated in the rapidly growing Shire of Cardinia. The school caters for students with intellectual and associated disabilities, supported by the Program for Students with Disabilities. The school is built to cater for 272 students and began at the beginning of 2014 with 63 enrolments. In 2019 enrolments have increased to approximately 268 which is approaching capacity for the current level of teaching spaces. Students age range is from 5-18. We have a dedicated staff of over 110 that includes classroom teachers, specialist teachers, therapists and education support staff who work collaboratively to provide students with the best possible programs to meet their needs.



Officer Specialist School's buildings are structured around four main communities: 5-8 year olds, 9-11 year olds, 12-15 year olds and 16-18 year olds, along with a range of specialist facilities. The facilities reflect a twenty-first century educational approach to teaching and learning through the provision of flexible learning spaces capable of catering for a range of student abilities and groupings.

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

Officer Specialist School's 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 safe, respectful, responsible and friendly at every opportunity.

Our school's vision is to create a safe, respectful and inclusive environment that empowers and inspires each member of our community to be their best

Our Statement of Values is available online on the school website and on the Compass Portal

3. Engagement strategies

Officer Specialist 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.

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 and 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
- deliver a broad curriculum to ensure that students are able to engage in subjects and programs that are tailored to their interests, strengths and aspirations
- teachers at Officer Specialist School have developed an instructional framework to ensure an explicit, common and shared model of instruction to ensure that evidenced-based, high impact teaching practices are incorporated into all lessons
- teachers at Officer Specialist 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
- positive behaviour and student achievement is acknowledged in the classroom, and formally in 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 forums such as class meetings and department assemblies. Students are also encouraged to speak with their teachers, Year Level Coordinator, Assistant Principal and Principal whenever they have any questions or concerns.
- create opportunities for cross—age connections amongst students through school tribes, athletics, music programs and peer support programs
- All students are welcome to self-refer to the department 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 a School wide Positive Behaviour Support Program with our staff and students, which includes targeted programs to develop:
 - Respectful Relationships
 - Protective behaviours
 - Play skills
- programs, incursions and excursions developed to address issue specific behaviour (i.e. resilience)
- opportunities for student inclusion (i.e. sports teams, clubs, recess and lunchtime activities)
- buddy programs, peer support programs

Targeted

- each department has a Department Leader, a senior teacher responsible for their department, who monitor the health and wellbeing of students in their year, and act as a point of contact for students who may need additional support
- all students from Year 10 and above will be assisted to develop a Career Action Plan, with targeted goals and support to plan for their future
- connect all Koorie students with a Koorie Engagement Support Officer
- all students in Out of Home Care will be monitored by the leadership team
- Officer Specialist School assists students to plan their work experience, supported by their Career Action Plan as part of their Pathways Program
- wellbeing and health 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

- Student Support Groups for each student meet a minimum of twice a year
- Individual Learning Plan and Behaviour Support Plan
- Program for Students with Disabilities
- referral to Student Welfare Coordinator and Student Support Services as needed
- referral to ChildFirst, Headspace
- Navigator
- Lookout

Officer Specialist 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
- developing an Individual Learning Plan and/or a Behaviour Support Plan
- developing individual profiles as needed for : communication, sensory needs
- developing an individual plan for the Alert Program
- 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

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.



4. Identifying students in need of support

Officer Specialist School is committed to providing the necessary support to ensure our students are supported intellectually, emotionally and socially. The teams in each department and the leadership team collaborate in developing and implementing strategies help identify students in need of support and enhance student wellbeing. Officer Specialist 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 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

5. 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.

6. 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 Officer Specialist School's Bullying policy.



When a student acts in breach of the behaviour standards of our school community, Officer Specialist 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
- consequences for actions: eg off the yard for a period of time
- restorative practices
- behaviour reviews (Behaviour Support Plans)
- suspension and expulsion are a last resort only to be considered in extreme circumstances

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.

7. Engaging with families

Officer Specialist 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 regular information session during which parents and carers can develop their understanding of school programs and processes
- providing parent volunteer opportunities so that families can contribute to school activities
- involving families in special activities
- involving families in school decision making where appropriate
- coordinating resources and services from the community for families
- including families in Student Support Groups, and developing individual plans for students.



8. Evaluation

Officer Specialist School will collect feedback 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

Statement of Values and School Philosophy

Bullying Prevention

Child Safe Policies

REVIEW CYCLE

This policy was last updated in May 2019