



STUDENT WELLBEING AND ENGAGEMENT POLICY



Help for non – English speakers.

If you need help to understand the information in this policy please contact Monash SDS on 9239 7400.

Monash SDS is committed to safety and wellbeing of all children and young people. This will be the primary focus of our care and decision-making.

Monash SDS has zero tolerance for child abuse.

Monash SDS is committed to providing a child safe environment where children and young people are safe and feel safe, and their voices are heard about decisions that affect their lives. Particular attention will be paid to the [cultural safety of Aboriginal children](#) and [children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds](#), [vulnerable children](#) as well as the safety of children with a [disability](#).

Every person involved in Monash SDS has a responsibility to understand the important and specific role they play individually and collectively to ensure that the wellbeing and safety of all children and young people is at the forefront of all they do and every decision they make.

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.

Monash Special Developmental 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. Monash SDS provides a friendly, caring and challenging learning environment that engages students who work to achieve their personal best in an atmosphere of mutual respect and co-operation

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.

OUR SCHOOL MOTTO:

“Enriching Individual Potential”

OUR SCHOOL EXPECTATIONS ARE:

Do your best
Help others succeed
Respect your environments

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POLICY

1. School profile

Monash Special Developmental School is a state government school within the North Eastern Victorian Region located in the City of Monash. It has been on the current site for 13 years in a well-resourced purpose built facility. In addition to the general classrooms the school also features specialist areas, outdoor learning environments, a multi purpose gym, a hydrotherapy complex, a bike path and specialised indoor and outdoor sensory areas. As the school is on a relatively new site, significant emphasis has been placed on the development of the school grounds.

Educational programs are provided for students who present with a developmental delay and/or intellectual disability aged between 2 years and 8 months and 18 years. Many of the students have co-morbid diagnoses, predominately being that of autism spectrum disorder. In 2022, the school is organised into 3 aged based sections, with 190 students enrolled and distributed across 22 classes.

The school community comprises of families from across the socio-economic spectrum with a diverse range of ethnicities. Monash recognises the important contribution parents make and their involvement is highly valued. A strong partnership between the school and its community supports the best outcome achievements for the students.

2. School Values, Philosophy and Vision

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

Monash Special Developmental 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:

Do your Best
Help Others Succeed
Respect your environment.

These core values are explicitly taught to students.

3. Wellbeing and Engagement strategies

Monash Special Developmental School 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 systems (all students, all staff, all settings), targeted (students with at-risk behaviour) and individual student strategies (specialised, individualised systems for students with high-risk behaviour) 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 and that embraces and celebrates diversity and empowers all students to participate and feel valued
- 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, parent survey data, student management data and school level assessment data
- deliver a broad curriculum including VET programs, supported by the STAR / Links Program to ensure that students are able to choose subjects and programs that are tailored to their interests, strengths and aspirations
- teachers at Monash SDS use the STAR / Links curriculum framework to support the Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework and Victorian Curriculum 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 Monash SDS 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 Statement of Values and School Philosophy 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
- positive behaviour and student achievement are 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
- carefully planned transition programs to support students moving into different stages of their schooling
- conduct regular SSG meetings with parents / carers to develop Individual Learning Plans

- create opportunities for cross—age connections amongst students through school plays, athletics, music programs and peer support programs
- students have the opportunity to contribute to and provide feedback on decisions about school operations through the Student Representative Council and section assemblies. Students are also encouraged to speak with their teachers, coordinators, Assistant Principal and Principal whenever they have any questions or concerns.
- we are gold accredited in School Wide Positive Behaviour Support which is enhanced by Monash SDS being a lead school in the Respectful Relationship program.
- measures are in place 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

- each section of the school has a Coordinator, a senior teacher responsible for their section, who monitors the health and wellbeing of students in their section, and act as a point of contact for students who may need additional 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 – refer to our [Inclusive and Diversity Policy](#) and [Cultural Inclusion Action Plan](#) for further information
- we provide a positive and respectful learning environment for our students who identify as LGBTIQ+ and follow the Department’s policy on [LGBTIQ Student Support \[insert any specific measures at your school to support LGBTIQ+ students\]](#)
- 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, student support groups and individual education plans
- 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
- students enrolled under the Department’s international student program are supported in accordance with our legal obligations and Department policy and guidelines at: [International Student Program](#)
- all students from year 10 will be assisted with targeted goals and support to plan for their future

Individual

Monash SDS 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
- SSG meetings / care team meetings with student (where appropriate) and their parent/carer to talk about how best to help the student engage with school
- developing an Individual Learning Plan and/or an A4 Student 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 such as SW-PBS coordinators
 - 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 Plan 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.

4. Identifying students in need of support

Monash SDS is committed to providing the necessary support to ensure our students are supported intellectually, emotionally and socially. The SW – PBS and Wellbeing team plays a significant role in developing and implementing strategies help identify students in need of support and enhance student wellbeing. Monash SDS 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
- engagement with families
- Compass incident data

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, 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.
- treat everyone with respect regardless of their gender, sexuality, cultural background, disability of family circumstances.

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.

6. School behavioural expectations and support

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. Bullying will be managed in accordance with our Bullying Prevention Policy.

Monash Special Developmental School has committed to and is gold accredited in School Wide - Positive Behaviour Support. (SW-PBS).

Positive Behaviour Support is a framework for the implementation of evidence-based interventions to achieve academically and behaviourally important outcomes for all students.

(Sugai, 2012)

SW-PBS is a broad range of systemic and individualised strategies for achieving important social and learning outcomes in schools while preventing problem behaviour. The key attributes of SW-PBS include preventive activities, data-based decision making, and a problem-solving orientation. SWPBS is a framework with four core, defining features:

Outcomes: Supporting social competence and academic achievement

Systems: Supporting staff behaviour

Data: Supporting decision-making

Practices: Supporting student behaviour

SW – PBS:

- Aims to prevent challenging behaviours
- Reduce the incidence of new challenging behaviours
- Reduce the intensity of existing challenging behaviours

- Aims to teach students how to behave appropriately across different environments
- Is a whole school approach to creating engaging environments for all
- Is a team-based approach which requires a high degree of commitment from school leaders and active involvement of all school members as well as the families
- Is a data driven approach
- SW - PBS is based on evidence-based practices

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 Monash SDS 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.

7. Engaging with families

Monash SDS 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 via our school office
- maintaining an open, respectful line of communication between parents and staff, supported by our Communicating with School Staff policy.
- providing parent group 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.

8. Evaluation

Monash SDS 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:

- Compass Pulse - incidents data
- parent survey
- case management
- CASES21

- SOCS
- Staff Survey

Monash SDS 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.

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 in hard copy 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](#)
- [Child Safety Code of Conduct](#)
- [Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations Policy](#)
- [Bullying Prevention Policy](#)
- [Inclusion and Diversity Policy](#)
- [Statement of Values and School Philosophy](#)

POLICY REVIEW AND APPROVAL

Policy last reviewed	June 2022
Consultation	School Council: 20 th June 2022 SRC: 14 th June 2022
Approved by	Principal: Lindy Abernethy Date: 20 th June 2022
Communication	Website Staff induction
Next scheduled review date	June 2024

