STUDENT WELLBEING AND ENGAGEMENT POLICY

Help for non-English speakers
If you need help to understand the information in this policy, please contact the school on 03 9314 4919

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.

Yarraville 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, 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 and management
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8. Evaluation

POLICY

1. School profile

Yarraville Special Developmental School caters for 105 students aged between 5 and 18 years with an intellectual disability in the moderate to severe range. Many have additional disabilities, including dual diagnosis and a high percentage of students have autism spectrum disorder (ASD).

The school is in the Southwestern Victorian Region. The designated transport zone includes most of the Cities of Maribyrnong and Hobsons Bay and some of the Cities of Melbourne and Moonee Valley. This area is culturally and socially very diverse and this diversity is valued. People of all cultures, religions and abilities are respected and encouraged to participate, to their best capacity, as students, parents/carers, staff members and volunteers, in the daily life of the school. Every person in our community has special talents and knowledge to share with others and we welcome the contributions of every person.

The Yarraville Special Developmental School community is committed to the provision of a safe, stimulating, and engaging learning environment. Student overall wellbeing is a primary focus, and our aim is to promote student wellbeing, engagement, and School Wide Positive Behaviours (SWPBS) and the Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS).

2. School values, philosophy and vision

Vision:

Excellence in Learning

Purpose

Our purpose is to engage our students in innovative and high-quality education and social programs in a friendly and caring environment. The school is a place where learning is fun, and our students achieve in ways which provide a basis for continued learning.
Our school community forms part of a diverse and larger community, and our focus is on the ability of our students to participate in this local community and beyond.

Statement of Values

Yarraville Special Developmental School Statement of Values sets out the behavioral expectations of all members in the school community, including the principal, all school staff, parents, students, and visitors. It respects the diversity of individuals in our school community and addresses the shared responsibilities of all members in building safe and respectful school communities.
Our Statement of Values is available on our website.

School Values

At Yarraville Special Developmental School our values guide the decisions and behaviours of all members of our school community:

- Be Respectful – Caring for, understanding, accepting, and appreciating ourselves and others.
- Be Responsible – Committed to supporting each other, for being accountable for our actions and encouraging all to achieve independence.
- Be Safe – ensure the physical, emotional and wellbeing of every member of the school community

Yarraville Special Developmental School has clearly stated and visible expectations for each of the learning areas that are specifically taught, modelled, and actively rewarded at a whole school and at a classroom level.

Junior & Middle Learning Areas

Expected Behaviours	Be Safe I will…	Be Respectful I will…	Be Responsible I will…	Always I will… 
Classroom	• Ask before you leave the room • Hands down, feet down • Walk inside	• Take turns • Respect others' personal space • Use quiet voice	• Look at schedule • Pack away • Take care of equipment	• Ask for help • Listen to teachers • Wait quietly
Playground	• Hands down, feet down • Wear helmet when riding	• Take turns • Clothes on in public	• Stop, look, listen • Personal space	
Transitions	• Walk together • Stop when asked • Stay together	• Take turns • Hands down, feet down	• Pack away • Go to the door	
Community Access	• Stay with the group • Put seatbelt on • Look (road signs)	• Take turns • Hands down, feet down • Look with your eyes	• Keep name tag on • Be careful • Pack away	

Senior Learning Area

Expected Behaviours	Be Safe I will…	Be Respectful I will…	Be Responsible I will…	Always I will… 
Classroom	• Ask an adult before I leave the room • Keep hands to myself and feet down • Walk inside	• Use my inside voice • Wait my turn • Use my manners	• Ask for a break • Look at schedule • Pack away when finished • Be organised	• Ask for help if needed • Listen to adults • Wait quietly • Do my work • Give personal space
Playground	• Safe Hands • Tell the teacher if something/someone is upsetting you • Be aware of my surroundings	• Wait my turn • Take a break • Ask to join in	• Wear a helmet when riding a bike • Be Sun Smart • Wear appropriate clothing	
Transitions	• Walk safely • Go straight to my next class	• Hold the door open for my friends • Wait for an adult	• Pack away when asked • Be organised	
Community Access	• Stay together with the group • Wear my seatbelt • Be careful of moving cars • Do not talk to strangers • Stop, Look, Listen	• Wait my turn • Listen when others are talking • Use my manners	• Keep lanyard/wrist band on • Pack away MT & Lunch • Wear appropriate clothing • Be organised	

3. Wellbeing and engagement strategies

Yarraville Special Developmental School believes that wellbeing and engagement are essential foundations for learning and life success.
Our approach prioritises relationships, consistency, and inclusion.
We recognise that positive learning outcomes occur when students are physically and emotionally safe, connected to their peers and teachers, and have access to learning that is meaningful and appropriately challenging.

Yarraville Special Developmental School uses a Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) to promote wellbeing, engagement, and inclusion for all learners.
This tiered model ensures early intervention, consistent monitoring, and escalation of supports when needed.

Universal Supports (for all students)

- Implementation of School-Wide Positive Behaviour Support (SWPBS)
- Consistent use of YSDS expectations: Be Safe, Be Respectful, Be Responsible
- Explicit teaching of social-emotional skills through programs such as Zones of Regulation and Respectful Relationships
- Consistent visual supports, routines, and communication systems (e.g. Proloquo2Go, Key Word Sign)
- Consistent routines, visual schedules and predictable transitions
- Positive reinforcement systems (verbal praise, tokens, certificates, celebrations)
- Regulation supports such as quiet spaces, sensory tools, and movement breaks
- Whole-school wellbeing initiatives (e.g. RUOK Day, International Day of People with Disability, Harmony Day)
- Regular attendance monitoring and early follow-up of absences
- Positive recognition systems for engagement and effort
- Data-informed review of attendance, behaviour, and wellbeing indicators
- developing Individual Education Plans and Behaviour Support Plans
- scheduled regular Student Support Group meetings for all students
- high and consistent expectations of all staff, students and parents and carers
- 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 Yarraville Special Developmental school use the Gradual Release of Responsibility (GRR) 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
- positive behaviour and student achievement is acknowledged in the classroom, and formally in school assemblies and communication to parents

Targeted Supports (for students at risk)

Yarraville Special Developmental School implements a range of strategies that support and promote targeted individual engagement.
These can include:

- Referral to Tier 2 MTSS Wellbeing Team
- Development of Student Support or Intervention Plans
- Small group or focused interventions (e.g. Learn to Play, Social Thinking, Zones Check-in, Regulation groups)
- Targeted attendance and behaviour monitoring
- Increased collaboration between teachers, allied health staff, and families
- 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, as per our Action Plan Aboriginal Learning, Wellbeing and Safety
- we support learning and wellbeing outcomes of students from refugee background through linking in with local services such as AMES Australia and Refugee Council of Victoria.
- 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
- staff will apply a trauma-informed approach to working with students who have experienced trauma

Individual

Yarraville Special Developmental School implements a range of strategies that support and promote individual engagement. These can include:

- Referral to Tier 3 – Care Team / Case Conference
- Development or review of Behaviour Support Plan (BSP), Risk Management Plan, and Individual Education Plan (IEP)
- Collaboration with external professionals (e.g. psychologists, speech therapists, occupational therapists, NDIS providers)
- Coordinated and consistent approach across all settings
- Regular case meetings to monitor progress and adapt supports
- Family partnership and co-design of strategies
- Where relevant, escalation to Student Support Services (SSS) or DET Wellbeing Teams

as well as to other Department programs and services such as:

- Navigator
- Lookout

Where necessary the school will support the student's family to engage by:

- Establishing regular and open communication through meetings, phone calls, and Seesaw direct communication

- Providing information in accessible formats (visuals, plain language, translated materials, interpreters if required)
- Inviting families to participate in Care Team meetings, termly student Support Group (SSG) meetings, and planning reviews
- Collaborating with families to co-design goals, supports, and consistent strategies across home and school settings
- Offering flexible meeting times and formats (in-person, phone, or Webex) to accommodate family schedules
- Providing guidance about community, wellbeing, and NDIS supports where relevant
- Involving allied health staff (e.g. Speech Pathologist, OT, Psychologist, Social Worker) to strengthen family–school partnerships
- Maintaining a strengths-based approach that values family input and expertise about their child
- Following up on plans and actions to ensure families feel heard, informed, and supported

4. Identifying students in need of support

Yarraville Special Developmental school is committed to providing the necessary support to ensure our students are supported intellectually, emotionally, and socially.

Staff processes include:

1. Monitoring attendance, behaviour and wellbeing data
2. Implementing Tier 1 supports first
3. Referrals to allied health or wellbeing teams
4. Referrals to MTSS Tier 2 or 3 when concerns persist
5. Consulting with families, NDIS therapists and other service providers
6. Reviewing and adapting interventions based on progress data

The Student Wellbeing Team also plays a significant role in developing, coordinating, and implementing strategies to identify students who may require additional support and to enhance overall student wellbeing.

Yarraville Special Developmental School uses a range of information sources and data tools to identify students in need of extra emotional, social, or educational support, including:

- Attendance records and patterns to identify changes or concerns
- Observation and professional judgment of classroom, leadership, wellbeing and allied health staff, noting changes in:
    - engagement or participation in learning
    - behaviour and self-regulation
    - self-care or daily living skills
    - social connectedness and peer interactions
    - motivation and emotional presentation

- Incident and behaviour data
- Student and family voice, including information shared through Student Support Group (SSG) and Care Team meetings
- Wellbeing and assessment tools, such as the Children's Wellbeing Continuum,
- Referrals and reports from external agencies, therapists, or support services

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:

- Feel safe, respected, and included at all times
- Learn in an environment that supports their individual needs, interests, and abilities
- Be treated with dignity, fairness, and understanding
- Access the curriculum, programs, and facilities that support their learning and development
- Use their preferred communication methods to express ideas, choices, and emotions
- Have their privacy and personal information protected
- Receive support when they experience challenges with learning, behaviour, or wellbeing
- Participate in decisions about their learning and school experience where appropriate

Students have the responsibility to:

- Follow the school expectations: Be Safe, Be Respectful, Be Responsible
- Contribute to a positive learning environment by listening, cooperating, and trying their best
- Use kind and respectful communication with peers and staff
- Care for themselves, others, and school property
- Follow staff directions and classroom routines to ensure safety
- Express feelings and needs in safe and appropriate ways
- Participate in learning and wellbeing programs designed to help them succeed
- Seek help from staff when they feel unsafe, upset, or unsure
- 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.

6. Student behavioural expectations and management

Behavioural expectations of students, staff and families are grounded in our school's Statement of Values. When a student acts in breach of the behavior standards of our school community, Yarraville Special Developmental School will institute a staged response, consistent with the Department's Student Engagement and Inclusion Guidelines. Where appropriate, parents/carers will be informed about the inappropriate behavior and the action taken by teachers and other school staff.

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.

When a student acts in breach of the behaviour standards of our school community, Yarraville Special Developmental School 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.

Yarraville Special Developmental School uses restorative and educative approaches to support students to learn from behavioural incidents and re-engage positively with their learning.

Disciplinary measures are applied as part of a staged and supportive response to inappropriate behaviour. They are used alongside wellbeing and engagement strategies to address the underlying causes of behaviour. All actions are applied fairly, consistently, and proportionately, with consideration given to the student's age, developmental level, disability, communication needs, and individual circumstances.

Disciplinary measures that may be applied include:

- Restorative conversations to repair relationships and support reflection
- Verbal reminders or prompts to guide expected behaviour
- Re-teaching of expectations or social skills within a supportive context
- Temporary removal from an activity or short break to enable regulation and reflection
- Loss of privilege (e.g. participation in a preferred activity) for a limited time, used as a learning opportunity
- Parent or carer contact to discuss concerns and plan consistent support strategies
- Development or review of a Behaviour Response Plan (BRP) or Risk Management Plan
- Care Team meeting to coordinate a structured response and review interventions
- 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: (click on blue hyperlinks)

- 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 Yarraville Special Developmental School 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.

Engaging with families

Yarraville Special Developmental 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 regular, open communication through phone calls, meetings, home–school diaries, Seesaw, and newsletters
- Involving families in decision-making through Student Support Group (SSG) meetings, Care Team meetings, and Individual Education Plan (IEP) reviews
- Providing accessible information, including the use of visuals, plain language, interpreters, or translated materials when needed
- Sharing student progress and achievements to celebrate success and strengthen home–school connections
- Collaborating on behaviour and wellbeing strategies to ensure consistency across settings
- Offering flexible meeting options (face-to-face, Webex, or phone) to accommodate family circumstances
- Referring and connecting families to additional supports, such as allied health, NDIS providers, and community wellbeing services
- Valuing family expertise by acknowledging that parents and carers know their child best and are essential partners in planning

Evaluation

Yarraville Special Developmental school 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:

- School based survey data from staff, parents/carers, and students
- Parent Opinion survey data
- Attitude to school survey data
- Incident reports
- School reports
- Cases 21 including attendance and absence data
- Student Online Case system (SOCS) Referrals
- Victorian Curriculum Personal and Social Capabilities growth

Yarraville Special Developmental school 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.

COMMUNICATION

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

- Available publicly on our school website
- Included in staff induction processes
- Included in staff handbook/manual
- Hard copy available from school office 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: (click on blue hyperlinks)

- 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: (click on blue hyperlinks)

- 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: (click on blue hyperlinks)

- Child Safety Policy.pdf
- Bullying Prevention Policy
- Inclusion and Diversity Policy
- Statement of Values and Schools Philosophy

POLICY REVIEW AND APPROVAL

Policy last reviewed	31/10/25
Consultation	This policy was shared with staff for feedback via email on 05/11/25 This policy was presented to school council on 12/11/25
Approval by	Principal
Next scheduled review date	12/11/27