

STUDENT WELLBEING AND ENGAGEMENT POLICY



Help for non-English speakers

If you need help to understand the information in this policy, please contact Assistant Principal on 93144919

RATIONALE:

The Department of Education and Training (DET) is committed to providing safe, secure, and high-quality learning and development opportunities for every student in all Victorian schools. Students can only reach their full educational potential when they are happy, healthy, and safe, and when there is a positive school culture that is fair and respectful to engage and support their learning.

To relate to and be consistent with the Effective Schools are Engaging Schools: Student Engagement Policy Guidelines by:

- the encouragement of educational achievement and excellence, prevention of absences and inappropriate behavior.
- fostering a healthy school culture in which high levels of achievement take place through engagement within a positive social environment.
- providing students with a safe learning environment where the risk of harm is minimized, and students feel physically safe and emotionally connected.
- providing support for individual circumstances when a student begins to disengage from their learning, when regular attendance is not consistent or positive behaviors are not demonstrated
- maximizing student learning opportunities and performance through engagement.
- providing genuine opportunities for student/parent(s)/carer(s) participation and student/parent voice.
- building a school culture based on positive behaviors and values.
- providing cognitive, behavioral, and emotional prevention and intervention for those students at risk of falling behind in their learning.
- empowering students to take ownership of their growth and development and building of school pride.
- promoting school engagement and inclusivity.



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 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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2. School purpose and values
3. Engagement strategies
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POLICY

1. School profile

Yarraville Special Developmental School caters for 60+ 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 ensure that students attend school regularly, participate in engaging programs, learn, and display positive behaviors in line with the School Wide Positive Behaviors (SWPBS) Model and which support citizenship.



A consistent focus has been on building the learning capacity of staff and students to improve our learning culture and student outcomes. Teachers work in professional learning teams to meet the individual learning needs of all students.

Students are supported both emotionally and academically through a range of programs and by the fostering of positive relationships – student/staff/parent/carers. The individual learning needs of our students is strongly supported by classroom teaching, program differentiation, individual learning plans and a focus on improving student outcomes in the Victorian Curriculum.

2. School vision, purpose, and values

Vision:

Yarraville Special Developmental School's vision is '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.


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
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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. The behavior expectations are taught and implemented according to the individual students' understanding.

Primary Learning Area

Expected Behaviours	Be Safe I will...	Be Respectful I will...	Be Responsible I will...	Always I will... 
Classroom	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ask before you leave the room Hands down, feet down Walk inside 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Take turns Respect others' personal space Use quiet voice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Look at schedule Pack away Take care of equipment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ask for help Listen to teachers Wait quietly
Playground	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hands down, feet down Wear helmet when riding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Take turns Clothes on in public 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stop, look, listen Personal space 	
Transitions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Walk together Stop when asked Stay together 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Take turns Hands down, feet down 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pack away Go to the door 	
Community Access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stay with the group Put seatbelt on Look (road signs) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Take turns Hands down, feet down Look with your eyes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Keep name tag on Be careful Pack away 	

Secondary Learning Area

Expected Behaviours	Be Safe I will...	Be Respectful I will...	Be Responsible I will...	Always I will... 
Classroom	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ask an adult before I leave the room Keep hands to myself and feet down Walk inside 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use my inside voice Wait my turn Use my manners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ask for a break Look at schedule Pack away when finished Be organised 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ask for help if needed Listen to adults Wait quietly Do my work Give personal space
Playground	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Safe Hands Tell the teacher if something/someone is upsetting you Be aware of my surroundings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wait my turn Take a break Ask to join in 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wear a helmet when riding a bike Be Sun Smart Wear appropriate clothing 	
Transitions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Walk safely Go straight to my next class 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hold the door open for my friends Wait for an adult 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pack away when asked Be organised 	
Community Access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stay together with the group Wear my seatbelt Be careful of moving cars Do not talk to strangers Stop, Look, Listen 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wait my turn Listen when others are talking Use my manners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Keep lanyard/wrist band on Pack away MY & Lunch Wear appropriate clothing Be organised 	

3. Engagement Strategies

To realize our purpose and values Yarraville Special Developmental School has in place a range of strategies to promote engagement and inclusion, positive behavior, 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.

The partnership and communication between home and school is central to student attendance and effective engagement in instruction and learning. Student engagement can be defined by three interrelated components: behavioral, emotional, and cognitive.

- **Positive learning engagement** refers to student's participation in education, including the academic, social, and extracurricular activities within the school program
- **Emotional engagement** encompasses student's emotional responses while in the classroom and school environment. It defines the student's sense of belonging and connectedness to the school
- **Cognitive engagement** relates to students' investment in learning and their intrinsic motivation and self-regulation

Key Strategies and tools for engagement include:

- 1:1 iPad for staff and students – promotes whole school modelling communication and promotion of student voice using Proloquo2Go, integrates technology into learning programs and supports assessment and reporting processes
- Seesaw – is a communication portal which provides parents the opportunity to view their child's learning through video and photograph. Seesaw is also used as a communication tool for our culturally and Linguistically Diverse families and as an assessment tool for teachers to monitor learning progress.
- Individual Learning Plans (ILP) – Supported by evidence-based data and developed in consultation with parents/carers, this identifies priority learning aligned to the Victorian Curriculum and informs classroom curriculum design
- Sensory Programs – Optimize learning readiness, identifying specific strategies implemented to assist in regulating behavior for increased engagement in learning
- Classroom Environments and Visual Supports – to support students learning and compliment primary prevention strategies, classroom and school environments are structured in a range of ways to accommodate differentiated learning such as classroom learning zones. Visual supports are provided within the classroom and in all external learning spaces to ensure students have a voice. Visual supports can range from Proloquo2go core words, individual symbol stick symbols, and a range of Alternative and Augmentative Communication (AAC) systems.
- Technology – Compliments the learning styles of many students, enables broader access to the curriculum and promotes increased engagement and motivation

- Specialist Programs – Cater to students’ personal strengths and interests and currently include performing arts, dance, visual art, horticulture, physical education, and swimming
- Projects with purpose – Students in the Senior Learning Area are offered the opportunity to participate and engage in applied learning tasks with the intention of developing useful skills that can be used in post school life, such as travel education, Lego Club, Soap Making, Mindfulness, Photography and Bike Maintenance Program.
- Camp –Secondary Learning Area students have the opportunity to attend an annual camp

Universal:

A summary of the universal (whole of school), targeted and individual engagement strategies used by our school is included below:

- high and consistent expectations of all staff, students, and parents/carers • priorities positive relationships between staff and students, recognizing 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 • analyzing 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 which includes subjects and programs that are tailored to students’ interests, strengths, and aspirations
- teachers at Yarraville Special Developmental School use the school’s instructional framework to achieve an explicit, common, and shared model of instruction to ensure that evidenced-based, high impact teaching practices are incorporated into all lessons
- teachers at Yarraville Special Developmental 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 statement of values is incorporated into our curriculum and promoted to students, staff, and parents/carers 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 behavior and student achievements are acknowledged
- monitor student attendance and implement attendance improvement strategies at a whole-school, cohort, and individual level
- we engage in school wide positive behavior support with our staff and students, which includes programs such as Respectful Relationships
- opportunities for student inclusion (i.e., sports teams, clubs, recess, and lunchtime activities)

Individual:

Yarraville Special Developmental School implements a range of strategies that support and promote targeted 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 (Team around the Learner)
- developing individual learning plans such as communication and sensory profiles, Individual Student Profiles, Behavior Support or Response Plans
- 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 Child First
 - Re-engagement programs

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
- running regular Student Support Group meetings for all students:
 - in Out of Home Care
 - with other complex needs that require ongoing support and monitoring.

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. The Student Engagement team plays a significant role in developing and implementing strategies which help identify students in need of support and enhance student wellbeing. For example, School will utilize 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, behavior, self-care, social connectedness, and motivation
- attendance, detention, and suspension data
- engagement with families
- self or parent referrals

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/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:

- learn in an environment free from abuse, bullying (including cyber bullying), harassment, violence, discrimination, or intimidation
- be protected from cyber grooming, sexual, emotional, and physical abuse • express their ideas, feelings, and concerns
- be treated with respect, dignity and as an individual
- have a safe learning environment provided to suit their physical & emotional, social, and educational needs
- have an Individual Learning Plan that prioritizes specific areas requiring development crucial to their individual educational, social, emotional, physical, and behavioral needs • be treated fairly and with due consideration of his/her circumstances • have personal care needs met discreetly and to be attended to with dignity and respect
- have access to school and community resources that enable successful learning and achievement

Students have the responsibility to:

- attend school
- participate fully in their educational program
- display positive behaviors that demonstrate respect for themselves, their peers, their teachers, and members of the school community
- respect the right of others to learn
- work and play safely with others

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 Behavioral Expectations



Behavioral 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.

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 Yarraville Special Developmental 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:

- teacher controlled consequences such as moving a student in a classroom or other reasonable and proportionate responses to their behavior
- withdrawal of privileges
- behavior reviews
- restorative practices
- 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 in our school and will not be used in any circumstance.

7. 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.



Yarraville Special Developmental School works hard to create successful partnerships with parents/carers and families by:

- ensuring all parents/carers have access to our school policies and procedures, available on our school website
- providing login details for access to Compass and Seesaw Apps
- connecting with families through events and groups facilitated by the Chaplain
- providing professional development opportunities to families on relevant topics
- conducting effective school-to-home and home-to-school communications
- involving families as participants in student learning, including attending school events and celebrations
- coordinating resources and services from the community for families, students, and the school
- involving families in Student Support Group meetings

8. Evaluation

Data will be collected each year regarding frequency and types of wellbeing issues, to measure the success of school-based strategies and approaches.

Some sources of data used are:

- 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 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.

COMMUNICATIONS

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
- Included in staff handbook/manual
- Hard copy available from school office upon request

Yarraville Special Developmental 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

- [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](#)

RELEVANT POLICIES: (click on blue hyperlinks)

- [Statement of Values and School Philosophy Policy](#)
- [Child Safe Policy](#)
- [Bullying Prevention Policy](#)
- [Inclusion and Diversity Policy](#)

REVIEW CYCLE: This policy will be reviewed as part of the school's two-year review cycle.

Policy last reviewed	October 2025
Approved by	Principal
Next scheduled review date	October 2027

