

# *Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy*

## **SCHOOL PROFILE STATEMENT**

Dandenong South Primary School is located in the south eastern region of Melbourne approximately forty kilometres from the metropolitan city centre. The school location itself is bordered by residential, commercial and industrial zones.

A kindergarten (in partnership with the City of Greater Dandenong), gymnasium, learning center, a new discovery centre, refurbished classrooms and an ongoing landscaping strategy have all continued to contribute to a learning environment of which the whole community is proud.

The school has a current enrolment at Census day 2021 of 597 students. Although 83% of students have origins outside of Australia and speak approximately thirty three different languages, most are born in Australia with family members having attended schools in the local community for several generations. The number of enrolments of refugees originating from Afghanistan has however recently increased, adding to the diverse multicultural profile of the school. Many of these children have had little or no previous schooling before enrolling at Dandenong South Primary School; and few of these families take up the option of enrolling their children in an English Language School.

In 2021, Dandenong South Primary School has a Student Family Occupation (SFO) index of 0.7249 and SFOE index is 0.6536. The school enrolment consists largely of children from families of low socio-economic status and of a language background other than English. 75% of year six students annually transition to local government schools for their secondary education.

At Dandenong South Primary School Literacy and Numeracy are the core curriculum areas with students being provided with personalised learning opportunities as part of their regular classroom program. To meet the needs of our students who predominantly speak English as an additional language, the school has also prioritised the provision of a suite of Literacy intervention programs including a first phase EAL / Refugee Bridging program, LEAP (Literacy Enhancement Assessment Program) oral language, phonological awareness, reading and writing programs, and reading intervention programs.

In addition, the school ensures that the School Wide Positive Behaviours along with a Restorative Practices approach provides a focus for developing positive relationships within the classroom, within the school and between the school and the community; with opportunities being provided for students to take responsibility for their behaviour and their learning.

Dandenong South Primary School has an outstanding teaching staff consisting of a blend of younger and more experienced professionals who demonstrate significant initiative and commitment to their students. There is a reasonably low annual rate of staff turnover which enables longer term planning and fosters school commitment and a shared sense of values; and as such we are well on the way to establishing a culture of collaboration and challenge.

Parents are vital partners in the educational process and in recent times, there has been a noticeable shift in parental involvement. There have been a variety of forums and an overwhelming number of parents have engaged in conversations about the future directions of the school. The swimming program, Foundation Information forums, excursions and special events, together with parent/teacher interviews and teacher conferences, also promote parent partnerships.

## WHOLE SCHOOL PREVENTION STATEMENT

Dandenong South Primary School is committed to the safety and wellbeing of all children. This will be the primary focus of our care and decision-making. We have a zero tolerance for child abuse.

Dandenong South Primary School is committed to providing a child safe environment where all children are safe and feel safe. Particular attention will be paid to the cultural safety of Aboriginal children and children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, as well as the safety of children with a disability.

Every person involved in Dandenong South Primary School has a responsibility to understand the important and specific role he/she plays individually and collectively to ensure that the wellbeing and safety of all children is at the forefront of all they do and every decision they make.

The positive school culture at Dandenong South Primary School encompasses a whole school approach which aims to support all members of the school community. Consultation with students, parents and Departmental support organisations, ensure that the school is responsive to student's social, emotional, cognitive and cultural needs. A key component of the Dandenong South Primary School's approach to prevention is to teach and acknowledge positive behaviours.

In addition, the school ensures that a Restorative Practices approach provides a focus for developing positive relationships within the classroom, within the school and between the school and the community; with opportunities being provided for students to take responsibility for their behaviour and their learning.

Dandenong South Primary School implements the School Wide Positive Behaviour Support (SWPBS) framework. This framework complements the existing social and emotional learning (SEL)/resilience classroom program, Resilience, Rights and Respectful Relationships (RRRR) which was implemented in 2017. Social and emotional skills are key to building positive relationships. The RRRR program covers a range of SEL and respectful relationship topics, including gender identity and positive gender relationships that are important to our students. The RRRR program equips our students with SEL skills to deal with change, challenge and anxiety and build more positive relationships with their peers.

The implementation of programs such as lunchtime clubs, student representative council, student leadership roles and a variety of social skills workshops (small group and one-on-one targeted social and emotional literacy programs) must be celebrated with all aiming to foster a greater feeling of connectedness - connectedness to self, peers, teachers and school - and to

develop more positive attitudes and behaviours. There is also a focus on ensuring high quality instructional practices, personalised learning, assessment, individual case management /individual learning improvement plans, social and emotional/resilience programs, late to school strategies, absence protocols, screening and referral processes.

The positive culture of the school is also predicated on student engagement being the basis for learning. To support this, the leadership team is actively engaged in developing classroom practice to ensure that the curriculum engages all students by recognising and responding to their diverse learning needs. Effective teaching, rigorous curriculum and the development of respectful relationships between staff and students are promoted through professional learning teams, action research projects and coaching.

The students at Dandenong South Primary School are also involved in decision making processes by the formulation of classroom protocols, participating in class meetings, addressing issues in community circles and participating in Student Representative Council meetings. Students have opportunities to monitor their own learning through self-assessment, which provides them with ownership and allows them to feel safe to take educational risks in the environment that they have helped to create. The school continues to build on opportunities for students to take on meaningful responsibilities and leadership responsibilities in each sub-school.

## **PREVENTION PROGRAMS**

### **Attendance**

Student absence and lateness is an ongoing concern for the school. It is recognised that the school's attendance data is affected by cultural practice, prolonged trips overseas and the social values relating to the purpose and significance of education in primary school. Lateness is monitored throughout the year and the data is used to improve student attendance. Sub school leaders regularly follow up on student absences and liaise with the school's welfare officer to provide support for students who are at-risk from disengaging from school. This support usually includes making links with support services both within and external to the school and developing productive family-school-agency partnerships. To encourage all students to arrive at school on time and to have a healthy start to the learning day, a Breakfast Club was introduced in 2008. On average, sixty students attend the Breakfast Club on a daily basis. Students are offered a range of healthy breakfast and lunch options, while developing relationships with other students from across the school.

### **Intensive Literacy and Numeracy Programs**

Literacy and Numeracy are the school's core curriculum areas. A specific focus on reading comprehension being deemed essential with the vehicle for making improvements in this area being identified as the school's oral language program. The provision of strategically targeted intervention in Literacy is consistent across the school and second phase EAL programs are offered to students from a non-English speaking background. Support and extension programs are also available for students in literacy and numeracy. To improve student learning outcomes and to engage students in the curriculum, explicit teaching, ongoing assessment and an authentic approach to learning are implemented.

## **Student Welfare and Discipline**

A whole school approach towards student welfare and discipline is implemented at Dandenong South Primary School. The focus of this approach is to teach and acknowledge positive behaviours. The most profound learning occurs when there is a healthy relationship between teacher and student and parents to build, maintain and restore relationships. SWPBS and Restorative Practices assists students to improve their social, emotional, behavioural and academic outcomes. This approach allows students to build resilience and develop problem solving skills which can be applied to real life situations.

## **Student Wellbeing**

Lunch time activities, electives and multi-aged programs are implemented across the school to enhance the behavioural and emotional engagement of the students. By participating in these programs, students are able to improve their interpersonal skills through teamwork and cooperation.

These programs include:

- Social skills workshops run by the Welfare Officer
- Lunchtime sport competitions
- Book Week, Literacy/ Numeracy Week and special events activities
- Lunchtime activities such as dance, art, games, etc.

## **Student Pathways and Transition**

Dandenong South Primary School aims to provide a smooth and efficient transition from pre-school to primary school and from primary school to secondary school. The formal Foundation Orientation Program provides opportunities for the local kindergarten students and their families to become familiar with the school environment, teaching staff and simple school routines.

The key internal transition phase from Year Five to Year Six is addressed by the provision of Information Evenings for the Year Five students and their families. Issues such as homework, leadership roles and behaviour are clarified and high expectations are articulated which set the scene for Year Six. To ensure that students are prepared for secondary school, they also attend orientation sessions at local secondary schools throughout the year.

Additional transition activities are organised between the different year levels to assist students and families in preparation for the following school year.

The school releases relevant staff to visit the local kindergartens and liaise with the secondary schools transition coordinators to obtain and share essential information about individual student's needs.

The school personalises transition programs for Refugee students, students who are on the Program for Students with Disabilities and Koorie students.

## PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

Professional learning is given high priority at Dandenong South Primary School to ensure the strategies and approaches that are adopted by the whole school are implemented with integrity. There is a strong tradition in the school of assisting teachers to develop and maintain high professional standards. All teachers participate in the school's coaching program. This allows for rigorous conversations to identify strengths and weaknesses for improvement.

Every year, the school wellbeing officer provides a range of professional development workshops for all staff on topics such as the Child Safe Standards, Attendance and Chronic Absence concerns, Respectful Relationships and the theory and implementation of Restorative Practices.

### **Supporting positive behaviours and relationships**

Dandenong South Primary School advocates the active involvement of parents in the learning and behaviour of each student. The school encourages this co-operative approach with parents through introductory interviews in Term One, parent-teacher interviews in Term Two, phone calls, conferences, and the use of student diaries in the senior sub-school. The school teaches and acknowledges positive student behaviours, however when this is compromised, logical and consistent consequences are implemented in a staged response. This approach is conducted in an informal way for minor incidents and is embedded in classroom teaching and learning. Serious incidents require more formal actions. This usually involves the Sub-School Leader/Assistant Principals/Principal/ Wellbeing Officer and parents. Documentation of these incidents is required on the SENTRAL management platform. In the case of repeated inappropriate behaviour, the school will devise strategies, behaviour plans and approaches to address the needs of individual students. This may include in-school suspensions, referrals to the Guidance Officer/Wellbeing Officer or intervention from specialist services and external agencies.

### **Rights and Responsibilities**

The Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 outlines a vision of human rights for all Victorians. The charter affirms that all people are born free and equal in dignity and rights. While the charter demands equality for all, it also emphasises the value of difference. The charter requires public authorities, including government schools and their employees to act compatibly with human rights and to consider them when making decisions and delivering services.

All members of the school community have a right to feel safe and supported at Dandenong South Primary School. It is the shared responsibility of the students, teachers and parents to maintain an inclusive and positive learning environment which focuses on student engagement and improved learning outcomes. To achieve this, the consistent application of the following rights and responsibilities are maintained across the school community.

(Refer to [http://www.austlii.edu.au/au/legis/vic/consol\\_act/cohrara2006433/](http://www.austlii.edu.au/au/legis/vic/consol_act/cohrara2006433/) for The Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006)

**All members of the Dandenong South Primary School community have a right to:**

- Fully participate in an environment free of discriminatory behaviour
- Be treated with respect and dignity
- Feel valued, safe and supported in an environment that is inclusive
- Acknowledge their obligations under the Equal Opportunity Act 2010 and the Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 and communicate these obligations to all members of the school community
- Participate and contribute to a learning environment that is safe, secure and stimulating
- Ensure that their actions and views do not impact on the health and wellbeing of other members of the school community

**Refer to:**

<https://www.education.vic.gov.au/hrweb/Documents/Equal-Opportunity-anti-discrimination-Policy.pdf> for the Equal Opportunity Act 2010.

All students have the right to:	All staff have the right to:	All parents have the right to:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Feel safe and secure at school</li> <li>● Be treated with respect</li> <li>● Learn in a safe and caring environment</li> <li>● Be supported and encouraged by teachers</li> <li>● Learn and play games without being interrupted</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Work in a safe and supportive school</li> <li>● Be treated with respect</li> <li>● Be supported by the school community</li> <li>● Be treated equally and fairly</li> <li>● Participate in the decision making processes of the school</li> <li>● Be supported by the leadership team</li> <li>● Receive feedback about performance</li> <li>● Professional development opportunities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Know that their children are in a safe and caring learning environment</li> <li>● Know that the individual learning needs of their children are being met</li> <li>● Be treated with respect</li> <li>● Be informed about their children’s behaviours and learning needs</li> <li>● Be able to express concerns and to be listened to</li> </ul>
All students have a responsibility to:	All staff have a responsibility to:	All parents have a responsibility to:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Respect the rights of others</li> <li>• Explore their full potential</li> <li>• Follow the school rules</li> <li>• Demonstrate the school values</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Build positive relationships with students as a basis for engagement and learning</li> <li>• Use and manage the resources of the school to create stimulating, safe and meaningful learning</li> <li>• Treat all members of the school community with respect and fairness</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Build positive relationships with members of the school community</li> <li>• Ensure students attend school on time, with the appropriate materials</li> <li>• Support the school by reinforcing the values, rules and expectations</li> <li>• Provide the school with current home, work and emergency contact telephone numbers</li> </ul>
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## Bullying and Cyberbullying

Dandenong South Primary School provides a positive school culture where bullying and cyberbullying are not tolerated. In doing so, the whole school community have the right of respect from others, the right to learn or to teach, and a right to feel safe and secure in the school environment. There are three broad categories of bullying and cyberbullying. These are explained in the school's Bullying and Cyberbullying Policies.

## CYBERSAFETY

It is an expectation that cyber safety awareness teaching and learning programs, which align with the Victorian Curriculum, are implemented across the school. Each sub-school provides explicit learning opportunities which focus on the skills and strategies associated with cyber safety. A variety of online teaching tools provided by the eSafety Commissioner's website and the Department of Education and Training are used to personalise and engage learning opportunities for individuals and groups of students, which focus on online safety.

### *Expectations*

The Leadership Team is expected to:

- Provide professional development opportunities for all staff members to develop their understanding about cyber safety and preventative measures for cyber bullying. These opportunities have included:
  - Small team based planning sessions to identify associated risks and then plan cyber safe lessons for students
  - Online webinars and information on cyber safe practices
  - Professional Development of Educators – Identify and Prevent Cyber bullying
- Provide information to parents to develop awareness about cybersafety and safe internet usage. This has included:
  - Locally run cybersafety information sessions for parents. These have been facilitated by staff and students.
  - Providing information such as the Cybersmart Guide for families
  - Providing online safety tips in newsletter articles

All classroom teachers in Foundation and the Junior Sub-School are expected to:

- Use 'Hectors World' as a resource to explicitly teach students how to keep their password safe

All classroom teachers in the Middle Sub-School are expected to:

- Use resources, such as 'Making good choice online' and 'Cybersmart Challenges' to explicitly teach students how to stay safe online
- Discuss the importance of safe online behaviour on a regular basis with students and especially at the start of the year when the 'Acceptable Use of Technologies' agreement is signed by the students

All classroom teachers in the Senior Sub-School are expected to:

- Use resources, such as 'Making good choice online' and 'GameOn' to explicitly teach digital literacy skills and online safety skills
- Discuss the importance of safe online behaviour on a regular basis with students and especially at the start of the year when the 'Acceptable Use of Technologies' agreement is signed by the students
- Monitor students' online behaviour and follow up with restorative chats and technology agreement outlined consequences, if necessary

## SHARED EXPECTATIONS

The school community has developed shared expectations for staff, students and parents, to ensure that the learning, safety and rights of all are respected. The expectations are intended to be positive and set out the anticipated and appropriate behaviours of the school community. The shared expectations are intended to support all members of the school community from a diverse range of cultural backgrounds, communities and experiences.

### *Expectations - Staff*

#### *Engagement*

**The Leadership Team is expected to:**

- Uphold the right of every child to receive an education
- Ensure that the school complies with its duty of care obligations to each student as well as its obligations under the Equal Opportunity and Humans Rights legislation
- Collaborate with the schools community to develop policies and procedures consistent with the schools values and the Departmental Guidelines
- Identify the diversity of the school community and deliver teaching and learning, educational and extracurricular activities, facilities, student services and community linkages which are inclusive and responsive to student needs

**The teachers are expected to:**

- Develop flexible pedagogical styles to engage different learners
- Deliver a curriculum and assessment that challenges and extends students learning
- Develop positive and meaningful relationships with students that promote engagement, wellbeing and learning



- Provide opportunities for student participation in the decision making process of the school

## Attendance

**In compliance with Departmental procedures, Dandenong South Primary School employees are expected to:**

- Promote regular attendance with all members of the school community
- Monitor and follow up on absences

## Behaviour

Dandenong South Primary School promotes positive behaviours by developing and implementing the use of logical and consistent consequences to address appropriate and inappropriate behaviour. As students are expected to participate in the curriculum, the school is committed to engaging all students in a safe and stimulating learning environment. The school will only exclude students in extreme circumstances.

**The Leadership Team is expected to:**

- Lead and promote preventative approaches to behavioural issues
- Monitor the profile of behavioural issues at the school and effectiveness of implemented strategies
- Provide appropriate professional development opportunities for staff to build their capacity to promote positive behaviours

**The Teachers are expected to:**

- Explicitly teach interpersonal skills
- Negotiate classroom protocols with students
- Implement behaviour management strategies that are consistent with the whole school approach
- Build a collegiate atmosphere with other staff to share strategies relating to behaviour management

## Expectations - Students

### Engagement

**Students are expected to:**

- Establish healthy, positive relationships with teachers and students
- Show respect to everyone who attends the school
- Have high expectations for themselves and make the most of the learning opportunities provided
- Report any behaviour which is unsafe or causes them distress

## Attendance

All students are expected to come to school every day. If the students can't attend school they must provide an explanation from their parents/guardians. Students should arrive to class on time, ready to learn.

## Behaviour

### Students are expected to:

- Support each other's learning
- Observe the rules of the school
- Follow all teachers' instructions
- Be considerate and supportive of each other
- Understand that bullying and cyberbullying, property damage, violence and inappropriate language is unacceptable
- Understand that disrupting the learning of other students is unacceptable

## Expectations - Parents

### Engagement and Behaviour

#### Parents are expected to:

- Promote the value of education, diversity and cultural differences in the home environment
- Help the school to provide student centered responses by providing all relevant information to the school
- Actively participate in supporting their children's learning by building positive relationships with the school. This can be done by attending student-parent-teacher meetings, special event activities, assemblies and responding to notices and telephone communication in a timely manner
- Understand and support Dandenong South Primary School's behavioural expectations to promote consistency both in and out of the school

## Attendance

Parents are expected to provide correct enrolment details for their child and ensure that their child attends school regularly. When a child is absent from school, parents must advise the school as soon as possible.

## Rewarding positive behaviour

### Staff across the school may:

- Provide positive notes for students to take home
- Provide positive reinforcement and feedback
- Select students for the weekly Principals Award
- Select students for the Aussie of the Month Award
- Make announcements at assembly to celebrate success
- Write articles in the school newsletter to celebrate success

## Classroom staged response

A restorative classroom setting is one that values dialogue through an inclusive approach where everyone expects to be heard, and through this participatory process students develop the capacity to learn in a practical way that emotions are an important and legitimate expression of healthy dialogue. This helps students deal with conflict, tensions and difference in respectful ways that engenders trust, empathy, responsibility, and fosters healthy relationships.

**When positive behaviours are not demonstrated by individual students in the classroom or specialist classes the following staged response is put in place:**

- Classroom teachers use restorative dialogue to deal with issues, which involves conversations with a student about their behavior and how it impacts on others, ultimately working out how to put things right.
- The classroom teacher may use individual informal use of restorative language with a student or may require the use of a 'circle' to restore a sense of connection and wellbeing through respectful and democratic dialogue.
- The classroom teacher may require further assistance with the support of the Sub School Team Leader/Assistant Principal/Principal/Wellbeing Officer and the parents are called for a follow up meeting.

## Playground Staged Response

**When positive behaviours are not demonstrated by individual students in the playground, the following staged response is put in place:**

- The yard duty teacher uses restorative dialogue to deal with the incident, which is directed to:

**Person responsible:** What happened?

Who has been hurt/affected?

**Person harmed:** How has this hurt/ affected you?

What would you like to see happen?

**To All:** Is that okay?

What can we do so this doesn't happen again?

If the incident requires further follow up, it is directed to the Sub School Team Leader for further consideration.

## Ongoing Behavioural Issues

**For students who exhibit ongoing behavioural issues; these strategies may be used:**

- Discussing the behaviour problems using the restorative dialogue and reaching an agreement for future behaviour

- Using 'Circle time' or class meetings in the grade in which students share their feelings, ideas and concerns and problem solve together on a regular basis
- Explicit teaching of appropriate behaviours
- Monitoring and providing feedback – this may be in a parent communication book or a student diary
- Providing 'Time Out' allowing students to have a 'cooling off' period
- Withdrawing a student from an activity, class, incursion or excursion due to inappropriate behaviour
- Providing an alternative educational setting within the school
- Student support meetings which may involve parents, the Wellbeing Officer, relevant DET staff or outside agencies
- In school suspensions for serious and/or continual misconduct. This will be implemented after parents have been notified.
- Suspension. For serious disciplinary measures the school follows the DET suspension process  
<https://edugate.eduweb.vic.gov.au/edrms/website/PAL/suspensions-process-flowchart.pdf>

(Refer to <http://www.gazette.vic.gov.au/gazette/Gazettes2016/GG2016S002.pdf> for the Ministerial Order No.870)

## Review

This policy was endorsed by the School Council on 27th May 2021 and will be reviewed as part of the four year cycle or as required.