



# Officer Specialist School

## STUDENT WELLBEING AND ENGAGEMENT POLICY



### Help for non-English speakers.

If you need help to understand the information in this policy, please contact Officer Specialist School



**(03) 5943 2800**

**[www.officerss.vic.edu.au](http://www.officerss.vic.edu.au)**

### PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that all students and members of our school community understand:

- (a) our commitment to providing a safe and supportive learning environment for students.
- (b) expectations for positive student behaviour.
- (c) support available to students and families.
- (d) our school's policies and procedures for responding to inappropriate student behaviour.

Officer Specialist School is committed to providing a safe, secure and stimulating learning environment for all students. We understand that students reach their full potential only when they are happy, healthy and safe, and that a positive school culture, 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
7. Engaging with families
8. Evaluation

## POLICY

### 1. School profile

1. Officer Specialist School is a purpose-built facility servicing the needs of students aged between 5-18, with mild to severe intellectual and associated disabilities in the shires of Cardinia and Casey. The school provides learning programs within the classroom spaces, visual and performance arts spaces, food technology, extensive therapy spaces and flexible learning spaces. Areas for social gathering are also featured.
2. Teaching staff, allied health and education support staff work collaboratively in teams to provide individualised programs for our diverse cohort of students.
3. Officer Specialist School aims to create reflective and independent learners for life through a learning community that provides a challenging and secure environment responsive to individual learning needs. We believe that effective learning occurs when outstanding and innovative teaching staff provide a variety of tasks that actively engage students who are encouraged to take responsibility for their own learning. The expectation is that students will be successful and enthusiastic learners capable of building positive relationships.

### 2. School values, philosophy and vision

Officer Specialist School's Statement of Values and School Philosophy is integral to the work that we do and is the foundation of our school community. Students, staff and members of our school community are encouraged to live and demonstrate our core values:

*We are learners who are:*

*Respectful*

*Friendly*

*Safe*

*Responsible*

Our school's vision is:

*Our dream at Officer Specialist School is to create a safe, respectful and inclusive learning environment that empowers and inspires each member of the community to be their best.*

Our Statement of Values is available online on the school website.

### 3. Wellbeing and engagement strategies

Officer Specialist School has developed a range of strategies to promote an inclusive and safe environment, engagement, 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. Social, emotional and educational support will be targeted to the individual needs of each student. We acknowledge that the needs of students will change over time as they grow and learn.

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

### Universal

- high and consistent expectations of all staff, students and parents and carers
- prioritise positive relationships between staff and students, recognising the fundamental role this plays in building and sustaining student wellbeing.
- creating a culture that is inclusive, engaging and supportive 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, attitudes to school survey, parent survey data, student management data and school level assessment data
- deliver a broad curriculum targeted to meet students developmental learning needs and tailored to their interests, strengths and aspirations.
- teachers at Officer Specialist School have developed an instructional framework to ensure an explicit, common and shared model of instruction to ensure that evidenced-based, high yield teaching practices are incorporated into all lessons.
- teachers at Officer Specialist School adopt a broad range of teaching and assessment approaches to effectively respond to the diverse learning styles, strengths and needs of our students and follow the standards set by the Victorian Institute of Teaching
- our school's Statement of Values are incorporated into our curriculum and promoted to students, staff and parents so that they are shared and celebrated as the foundation of our school community.
- carefully planned transition programs to support students moving into different stages of their schooling.
- positive behaviour and student achievement is acknowledged in the classroom, and formally in school assemblies and communication to parents. The school implements a School Wide Positive Behaviour Program to promote common values and expectations across the school.
- monitor student attendance and implement attendance improvement strategies at a whole-school, cohort and individual level.
- students have the opportunity to contribute to and provide feedback on decisions about school operations through forums including year group meetings and SSG's and individual meetings. Students are also encouraged to speak with their teachers, Year Level Coordinator, Assistant Principal and Principal whenever they have any questions or concerns.
- create opportunities for cross—age connections amongst students through the Tribes program, school social activities, athletics, music programs and peer support programs.
- All students are welcome to self-refer to the Department Leaders, Assistant Principal and Principal if they would like to discuss a particular issue or feel as though they may need support of any kind. We are proud to have an 'open door' policy where students and staff are partners in learning.
- we engage in school wide positive behaviour support with our staff and students, and will include programs such as:
  - Respectful Relationships
  - Bully Stoppers

- Safe Schools
- programs, incursions and excursions developed to address issue specific needs or behaviour.
- opportunities for student inclusion (i.e. sports teams, clubs, recess and lunchtime activities)
- buddy programs, peers support programs
- 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 department has a Leader/Coordinator, who will monitor the health and wellbeing of students in their year, and act as a point of contact for students who may need additional support.
- all students from Year 10 and above will be assisted to develop a Career Action Plan, with targeted goals and support to plan for their future.
- 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 Aboriginal Learning, Wellbeing and Safety Plan.
- culture PLC established to develop an understanding and appreciation of the diverse cultures represented across our school.
- all students in Out of Home Care will be monitored and regular care team meetings will be held to discuss their progress.
- 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](#)
- 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
- all students 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 learning plans
- Officer specialist School has a Pathways program during the last three years of school to support students to explore their options and plan their Post School Action Plan
- Staff teams will undertake health promotion and social skills development in response to needs identified by student wellbeing data, classroom teachers or other school staff each year.
- staff will apply a trauma-informed approach to working with students who have experienced trauma.

### Individual

All Students at Officer Specialist School will have:

- Student Support Group meetings at least twice a year and at the request of home or school
- A personalised learning Plan and reports at mid-year and end of year

If deemed necessary students will also have:

- A Behaviour Support Plan
- A referral to Student Welfare Coordinator and Student Support Services
- A referral to Orange Door, Headspace
- A referral to Navigator
- A referral to Lookout

Officer Specialist School implements a range of strategies that support and promote individual engagement. These can include:

- building constructive relationships with students at risk or students who are vulnerable due to complex individual circumstances.
- meeting with student and their parent/carer to talk about how best to help the student engage with school.
- developing an Individual Learning Program and a Behaviour Support Plan as required
- 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 Orange Door
  - Re-engagement programs such as Navigator

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

- being responsive and sensitive to changes in the student's circumstances and health and wellbeing.
- collaborating, where appropriate and with the support of the student and their family, with any external allied health professionals, services or agencies that are supporting the student.
- monitoring individual student attendance and developing an Attendance Improvement Plans in collaboration with the student and their family
- engaging with our regional Koorie Engagement Support Officers
- running regular Student Support Group meetings for all students:
  - in Out of Home Care
  - and with other complex needs that require ongoing support and monitoring

#### 4. Identifying students in need of support

Officer Specialist School is committed to providing the necessary support to ensure our students are supported intellectually, emotionally and socially. The Student Wellbeing team plays a significant role in developing and implementing strategies help identify students in need of support and enhance student wellbeing. Officer Specialist School will utilise the following information and tools to identify students in need of extra emotional, social or educational support:

- personal, health and learning information gathered upon enrolment and while the student is enrolled.

- attendance records
- academic performance
- observations by school staff such as changes in engagement, behaviour, self-care, social connectedness and motivation.
- attendance, detention and suspension data
- engagement with families
- self-referrals or referrals from peers

## 5. Student rights and responsibilities

All members of our school community have a right to experience a safe and supportive school environment. We expect that all students, staff, parents and carers treat each other with respect and dignity. Our school's Statement of Values highlights the rights and responsibilities of members of our community.

Students have the right to:

- participate fully in their education.
- feel safe, secure and happy at school.
- learn in an environment free from bullying, harassment, violence, discrimination or intimidation.
- express their ideas, feelings and concerns using their preferred mode of communication.

Students have the responsibility to:

- participate fully in their educational program.
- display positive behaviours that demonstrate respect for themselves, their peers, their teachers and members of the school community.
- respect the right of others to learn.

Students who may have a complaint or concern about something that has happened at school are encouraged to speak to their parents or carers and approach a trusted teacher or a member of the school leadership team.

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 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

Student bullying behaviour will be responded to consistently with Officer Specialist School's Bullying policy.

Our school considers, explores and implement positive and non-punitive interventions to support student behaviour before considering disciplinary measures such as detention, withdrawal of privileges or withdrawal from class.

The School Wide Positive Behaviour Support Program makes our school values clear to the school community. The program supports students to understand the school expectations and explicitly teaches appropriate behaviour.

Strategies consistent with the School Wide Positive Behaviour Support Program will be implemented to promote positive behaviour and avoid behavioural incidents. Strategies will be developed for individual students in response to their sensory and physical needs and in consideration of their diagnosis and family context.

When a student acts in breach of the behaviour standards of our school community, Officer Specialist School will institute a staged response, consistent with the Department's Student Engagement and Inclusion Guidelines and appropriate for each student. Where appropriate, parents will be informed about the inappropriate behaviour and the consequences implemented by teachers and other school staff.

Behavioural incidents are all recorded, and data analysed as part of the process to develop Behaviour Support plans

Disciplinary measures may be used as part of a staged response to inappropriate behaviour in combination with other engagement and support strategies to ensure that factors that may have contributed to the student's behaviour are identified and addressed. Disciplinary measures at our school will be applied fairly and consistently.

Students will always be provided with an opportunity to be heard.

Disciplinary measures that may be applied include:

- warning a student that their behaviour is inappropriate.
- teacher controlled consequences such as moving a student in a classroom or other reasonable and proportionate responses to misbehaviour.
- withdrawal of privileges.
- referral to the Year Level Coordinator/ leadership.
- restorative practices.
- time off school in consultation with parents/carers.
- behaviour support plans formulated by the team working with the student.
- suspension and expulsion as a last resort.

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 Officer Specialist School is responsible for ensuring all suspensions and expulsions are recorded on CASES21.

Restraint and seclusion will only be used as a last resort in an emergency where there is an imminent threat of physical danger to the student or others. All incidents will be reported to the department.

Corporal punishment is prohibited by law and will not be used in any circumstance at our school.

## 7. Engaging with families

Officer Specialist School values the input of parents and carers, and we will strive to support families to engage in their child's learning and build their capacity as active learners. We aim to be partners in learning with parents and carers in our school community.

We work hard to create successful partnerships with parents and carers by:

- ensuring that all parents have access to our school policies and procedures, available on our school website.
- engaging parents in their students learning through the Seesaw platform
- maintaining an open, respectful line of communication between parents and staff
- providing parent volunteer opportunities through the PFA so that families can contribute to school activities.
- informing families about any curriculum-related activities
- involving families in school decision making by seeking feedback
- coordinating resources and services from the community for families
- including families in Student Support Groups, and developing individual plans for students

## 8. Evaluation

Officer Specialist School will collect 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:

- student survey data
- incidents data
- school reports
- parent survey
- case management
- CASES21
- SOCS

## COMMUNICATION

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

- Available publicly on our school's website and on Compass
- Included in staff induction processes.
- Included in transition and enrolment packs.
- Included as annual reference in school newsletter.
- 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
- Bullying Prevention Policy
- Inclusion and Diversity Policy
- Statement of Values and School Philosophy

## POLICY REVIEW AND APPROVAL

Policy last reviewed	24.4.23
Consultation	Consultation occurred with school staff, and presentation to school council during policy development process.
Approved by	Principal
Next scheduled review date	24.4.25