



DEBNEY MEADOWS
PRIMARY SCHOOL
FLEMINGTON

Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy



Help for non-English speakers

If you need help to understand the information in this policy please contact Debney Meadows Primary School on 93761570 or debney.meadows.ps@education.vic.gov.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.

Debney Meadows Primary 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.

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2. School values, philosophy and vision
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POLICY

1. School profile

Debney Meadows Primary School is an inner-city school located on the edge of Debney's Park. The school prides itself on innovative teaching and assessment practices that aim to cater to the individual learning needs of each and every child.

The school strives to offer high quality educational practices and the adoption of contemporary pedagogy that guides students through integrated phases of learning. The fundamental aim of the school is to foster and balance the intellectual, physical, cultural and social development of its students within 21st Century skills framework.

The pedagogical focus is to provide an inclusive teaching and learning program, with consistent, collaborative teaching to best meet the needs of all students.

Our approach to individualised student learning ensures that your child is catered for in all areas of academic learning as well as supporting them in their social and emotional learning. We offer a range of supports that will make sure that no child is left behind.

Our school is culturally diverse with a Student Family Occupation (SFO) density is 0.79.

In 2022, Debney Meadows School staff comprises of 8.83 EFT Teaching staff made up of classroom teachers, Science and Art specialist teacher, a Mental Health and Wellbeing Coordinator, one Leading Teacher, one Learning Specialists and Principal. There were 4.82 EFT Education Support Staff comprising of Office Administration and Education Support staff.

Debney Meadows Primary School provides an approved curriculum framework based on the Victorian Curriculum and differentiated to meet student needs. Specialist classes include science, visual art, physical education and social emotional learning.

The school provides a program for students with disabilities (PSD) and supports students with an English as an additional language (EAL) background.

The school is part of the Mental Health in Primary Schools initiative, coordinated by the Royal Children's Hospital in response to the Royal Commission into Victoria's Mental Health System. The school has a mental health and wellbeing coordinator as part of the program. They also run the CASEA (RCH) program with a strong focus on supporting students through the School Wide Positive Behaviour Program and Berry Street Education Model.

The school has an extensive excursions program to provide rich experiences for students to support their learning and social development and offers a school camp program biannually.

2. Wellbeing and engagement strategies

Debney Meadows Primary School has developed a range of strategies to promote engagement, an inclusive and safe environment, positive behaviour, and respectful relationships for all students in our school. We recognise the importance of student friendships and peer support in helping children and students feel safe and less isolated. We acknowledge that some students may need extra social, emotional or educational support at school, and that the needs of students will change over time as they grow and learn.

A summary of the whole of school, targeted (small group & cohort specific) and individual engagement strategies used by our school is included below.

Whole School Strategies to promote positive behaviour and inclusion:

- implementation of the School Wide Positive Behaviour Support (SWPBS) framework where we define, teach and reinforce positive behaviours for all students. This approach focuses on building a safe and positive environment in which all students can learn through the establishment of processes, procedures and programs such as:
 - Matrix of Expected Behaviour,
 - Behaviour Response Processes
 - Acknowledgement System - 'Excellence Cards' and Badge System
 - Social Emotional Learning Continuum and Specialist Class
 - Respectful Relationships using the Resilience, Rights & Respectful Relationships learning materials
 - The Zones of Regulation
- 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
- teachers at Debney Meadows Primary School use an Instructional Model 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 Debney Meadows Primary 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
- 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 at school showcase assemblies with presentation of Badges and certificates
- 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 the Junior School Council. Students are also encouraged to speak with their teachers, Education Support Staff and Leadership Team whenever they have any questions or concerns.
- create opportunities for inclusion and cross—age connections amongst students through our Clubs, lunchtime games and activities
- 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 year level has an Instructional Leader responsible for their cohort, who with their team monitors the health and wellbeing of students in their year, and act as a point of contact for students who may need additional support
- Koorie students are supported to engage fully in their education, in a positive learning environment that understands and appreciates the strength of Aboriginal and Torres Strait

Islander culture – refer to our Action Plan for Aboriginal Learning and Wellbeing Policy for further information

- our English as a second language students are supported through our classroom programs and Response to Intervention, and all cultural and linguistically diverse students are supported to feel safe
- we support learning and wellbeing outcomes of students from refugee background through Individual Learning Plans and Student Support Group meetings
- 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
- students with a disability are supported to be able to engage fully in their learning and school activities in accordance with the Department's policy on [Students with Disability](#), such as through reasonable adjustments to support access to learning programs, consultation with families and where required, Student Support Groups and Individual Learning Plans
- Leadership and the Mental Health and Wellbeing Coordinator support students' social skills development in response to needs identified by student wellbeing data, classroom teachers or other school staff and conduct small group targeted intervention focusing on social & emotional learning skills
- staff apply a trauma-informed approach to working with students who have experienced trauma (e.g. Berry Street Education Model)
- students enrolled under the Department's international student program are supported in accordance with our legal obligations and Department policy and guidelines at: [International Student Program](#)
- Our Allied Health Team includes a Speech Pathologist who assess and develop programs for students to better access their language and communication needs. Support and advice is provided to teaching staff to improve practice and support the speech and language needs of students within their classrooms based on recommendations from the Allied Health Team
- Response to Intervention is implemented school wide to support students identified as at risk or needing extension in their learning

Individual

Debney Meadows Primary School implements a range of strategies that support and promote individual engagement by:

- 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 Plan and/or a Behaviour Support Plan
- considering if any environmental changes need to be made, for example changing the classroom set up
- referring the student to:
 - school-based wellbeing supports (e.g. Mental Health and Wellbeing Coordinator, Speech Pathologists for individual therapy)
 - Student Support Services including Visiting Teachers

- Appropriate external support such as council based youth and family services, other allied health professionals, Headspace, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services or ChildFirst.

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

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

3. Identifying students in need of support

Debney Meadows Primary School is committed to providing the necessary support to ensure our students are supported intellectually, emotionally and socially. Leadership and the Mental Health and Wellbeing coordinator plays a significant role in developing and implementing strategies to help identify students in need of support and enhance student wellbeing. Debney Meadows Primary 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.

4. Student rights and responsibilities

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

Students have the right to:

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

Students have the responsibility to:

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

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.

5. Student behavioural expectations and management

Behavioural expectations of students are grounded in our school's Statement of Values and Matrix of Expected Behaviours.

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, Debney Meadows Primary School will institute a staged response, consistent with the Department's policies on behaviour, discipline and student wellbeing and engagement. Any decisions made in relation to addressing challenging behaviours should be clearly documented and discussed with the student's parent or guardian. The disciplinary measures that may be implemented for incidents of challenging behaviour will depend on the nature and severity of the incident.

Debney Meadows Primary School is committed to providing a safe, orderly and secure learning environment. Successful interventions are underpinned by strong staff-student relationships, as they require an understanding of the underlying factors influencing behaviour and the immediate triggers for its occurrence. The teacher or appropriate staff member should seek to identify the reasons and triggers for that child's behaviour and address these where possible to reduce the likelihood of future problems.

We have an agreed procedure for addressing student behaviour that disrupts the learning environment or is a risk to the safety of Debney Meadows Primary students, staff or community members. Our procedures are based on the belief that, given the opportunity, students can correct classroom misbehaviours when they are alerted to teacher concerns.

Debney Meadows Primary Schools Behaviour Management Procedure can be accessed on our school's website [SWPBS at DMPS](#) and sets out the sequence of actions to be taken in the case of 'Major Behaviours' and 'Minor Behaviours'. 'Major Behaviours' are those which pose an immediate threat to the safe, orderly and secure environment and must be addressed immediately; all other behaviours are deemed 'Minor Behaviours'.

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

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:

- use of the Learning Ladder
- 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 Leadership Team
- restorative practices
- behaviour support and intervention meetings
- 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:

- <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 Debney Meadows Primary 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.

6. Engaging with families

Debney Meadows Primary 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 an open, respectful line of communication between parents and staff, supported by our Communicating with School Staff policy.
- providing parent volunteer opportunities so that families can contribute to school activities
- involving families with homework and other curriculum-related activities
- involving families in school decision making
- coordinating resources and services from the community for families
- including families in Student Support Groups, and developing individual plans for students
- access to online portals including SeeSaw and Compass.

7. Evaluation

Debney Meadows Primary 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, including attendance and absence data.

Debney Meadows Primary 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's website
- Included in staff induction processes
- 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](#)

- [Student Support Groups](#)
- [Individual Education Plans](#)
- [Behaviour - Students](#)
- [Behaviour Support Plans](#)
- [Student Support Services](#)

- [Program for Students with Disabilities](#)
- [Mental health toolkit](#)
- [headspace](#)
- [Navigator](#)

- [LOOKOUT](#)

The following school policies are also relevant to this Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy:

- Child Safety Policy
- Bullying Prevention Policy
- Inclusion and Diversity Policy
- Statement of Values and School Philosophy

POLICY REVIEW AND APPROVAL

Policy last reviewed	August 2023
Consultation	The school community has been consulted via Compass – 27 th July 2023
Approved by	Principal
Next scheduled review date	August 2025

