

STUDENT WELLBEING AND ENGAGEMENT POLICY



Help for non-English speakers

If you need help to understand the information in this policy please contact the Assistant Principal at Diamond Valley SDS on 9432 1022.

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.

Diamond Valley SDS 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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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
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POLICY

1. School profile
2. Diamond Valley SDS is a purpose designed government school offering a safe and effective learning environment for the very specific needs of school age students with significant intellectual, multiple or behavioural disabilities. Situated on the outskirts of Greensborough it

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utilises a Department of Education and Training (DET) funded transport system to draw students from a wide zone of surrounding areas. We are committed to providing the highest quality education for our students. Based on the right of each individual to develop to their maximum potential using a student-centred approach through a caring and supportive environment, our school policy encourages parents, staff and carers to play an active role in planning educational and developmental programs. Student Support Groups established for each student emphasise the co-responsibility of home and school in sharing the learning process. These meet regularly to review students' individual programs. The partnership of home and school is exemplified by the high level of day-to-day contact by way of telephone or communication book or via StoryPark, and the positive way in which parents are encouraged to participate in their children's education. The school community takes pride in the innovative ways we continually adapt and improve our program and resources to reflect changing student needs and educational practice. By providing opportunities for our school community to train, plan and make decision together, strength is given to our shared goals.

The school currently has approximately 130 students across the main Brentwick Drive campus, two satellite locations at Briar Hill P.S and Greensborough S.C and a campus at Whittlesea which caters for students within the Whittlesea area.

3. School values, philosophy and vision

Diamond Valley Special Developmental School is committed to providing a safe, supportive and inclusive environment for all students, staff and members of our community. Our school recognises the importance of the partnership between our school and parents and carers to support student learning, engagement and wellbeing. We share a commitment to, and a responsibility for, creating an inclusive and safe school environment for our students.

The programs and teaching at Diamond Valley Special Developmental School support and promote the principles and practice of Australian democracy, including a commitment to:

- elected government
- the rule of law
- equal rights for all before the law
- freedom of religion
- freedom of speech and association
- the values of openness and tolerance.

This policy outlines our school's vision, mission, objective, values and expectations of our school community. This policy is available in our staff induction handbook, student diary and enrolment/transition packs.

To celebrate and embed our Statement of Values and Philosophy in our school community, we

- display posters and banners that promote our values in our school
- celebrate our values in our school newsletter

Our Statement of Values is available online at: <https://diamondvalleysds.vic.edu.au/>

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VISION

Diamond Valley Special Developmental School's vision is to strive towards ensuring everyone's world becomes a better place.

MISSION

Diamond Valley Special Developmental School's mission is to confidently promote a vibrant learning community, delivering an inclusive and supportive educational experience.

OBJECTIVE

Diamond Valley Special Developmental School's objective is to ensure that every student leaves Diamond Valley Special Education School with a functional communication system and the tools to flourish throughout life.

VALUES

Diamond Valley Special Developmental School's values are integrity, respect and responsibility.

We demonstrate integrity by always doing the right thing, even if no one else is around.

We respect ourselves, our school and each other, and understand that our attitudes and behaviours have an impact on the people around us.

We ensure our responsibilities are met to ensure that all students have the opportunity to optimise their learning opportunities.

4. Wellbeing and engagement strategies

Diamond Valley Special Developmental School has developed a range of strategies to promote engagement, positive behaviour and respectful relationships for all students in our school. We understand that our students with an intellectual disability may need individualised social, emotional or educational support at school and that the needs of students will change over time as they grow and learn.

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
- 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 and parent survey data.
- deliver a broad curriculum in a manner that utilises individualised programs that are tailored to their interests, strengths and aspirations
- teachers at Diamond Valley 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

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- 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
- monitor student attendance and implement attendance improvement strategies at a whole-school and individual level
- opportunities for student voice and agency are offered at every available opportunity
- we engage in school wide positive behaviour support with our staff and students, which includes programs such as:
 - Respectful Relationships
 - Safe Schools
- programs, incursions and excursions developed to address issue specific behaviour (i.e. anger management programs)
- buddy programs, peer support programs

Individual

- Student Support Groups, see:
<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/participation/pages/supportgroups.aspx>
- Individual Learning Plan and Behaviour Support Plan
- Program for Students with Disabilities
- referral to MHP or Wellbeing Lead teacher and Student Support Services
- referral to Orange Door, Headspace
- Navigator
- Lookout

Diamond Valley Special Developmental 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 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
 - 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 MHP or Orange Door
 - Re-engagement programs such as Navigator

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

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

5. Identifying students in need of support

Diamond Valley SDS 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 that help identify students in need of support and enhance student wellbeing. Diamond Valley SDS 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
- engagement with families
- self-referrals or referrals from peers

6. 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

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- 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.

7. Student behavioural expectations

Students are expected to behave in a way that befits their understanding of school expected behaviours within the context of the school's school-wide positive behaviour program. As with all students within the school this will vary based on their cognitive ability to understand expectations and they will be supported and explicitly taught school rules and expectations.

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

8. Engaging with families

Diamond Valley SDS 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.

9. Evaluation

Diamond Valley SDS 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
- SOCS

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Diamond Valley SDS 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 in transition and enrolment packs
- Included in student diaries so that it is easily accessible to parents, carers and students
- 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/carers 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

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| Policy last reviewed | 14/09/22 |
| Consultation | School Council 15/09/22 |
| Approved by | Principal |
| Next scheduled review date | 15/09/24 |

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