



No. 5218

Sunbury & Macedon Ranges Specialist School

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STUDENT ENGAGEMENT AND WELLBEING POLICY



Help for non-English speakers

If you need help to understand the information in this policy, please contact the school administration office via email or phone

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.

Sunbury and Macedon Ranges 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 statement:

Sunbury and Macedon Ranges Specialist School is a dual campus school that has two very distinct campuses that lie in equally beautiful and unique environments within Sunbury and the Macedon Ranges. Sunbury and Macedon Ranges Specialist School caters for the needs of students aged between 5 and 18 years with mild to severe intellectual disability.

The Sunbury Campus is situated on Jacksons Hill within purposefully adapted and renovated historical buildings. The Bullengarook Campus is situated in Bullengarook at the site of what was once a very small primary school, in a magnificent rural environment surrounded by lush vegetation and natural wildlife. The Sunbury Campus is predominantly our primary campus, years Prep to Grade 6 as well as an alternate secondary program are based at the campus. The Bullengarook Campus caters for our secondary students, Year 7 to Year 12.

Our students are supported by a very dedicated team of staff. Most teachers hold a Special Education qualification. Education support staff support teaching and learning across the classrooms and the level of support provided is dependent on the needs of students in each classroom. Allied health staff comprising of Speech Therapists, Occupational Therapists, Physiotherapist, Music Therapist, Nurses, Social Workers and therapy assistants make up the Allied Health Team that work across the school.

SMRSS offers a broad and comprehensive based on the Victorian Curriculum and Victorian Pathways Certificate (VPC).

Specialist programs to enhance curriculum provision at the Sunbury campus include Art, P.E, Homecrafts, Music Therapy and Library.

Specialist Program to enhance curriculum provision at the Bullengarook campus include; Food Technology, Physical Education, Music, Visual Arts, Material Technology as well as School Productions and a Debutante ball. The Therapy services team (Physiotherapist, O.T, Speech Pathologist, Social Worker) support staff in the delivery of augmentative communication systems and assessment of receptive/expressive language, along with skills of daily living and independence training.

A Wellbeing team comprising of Social workers, and NDIS Navigator, Mental Health and Wellbeing Leader oversee the Wellbeing needs of the students across both campuses.

Our vision is “to empower students towards independence through a command of language, mobility and social competency. To provide a stimulating and safe environment that fosters independence, mutual respect and self-esteem. Emphasis is placed on empowering students towards their optimum individual potential and to live as productive and contributing members of their communities.”

2. School values, philosophy and vision

Sunbury and Macedon Ranges Specialist School’s values are:

Consistency, Credibility and Continuity

We value consistency through:

- Shared understanding of practice
- Curriculum delivery aligned to the Victorian Curriculum
- Whole of School organization
- Policies, procedures and protocols

We value credibility through:

- The commitment to the Framework for Improving Student Outcomes
- Respectful relationships throughout the school community
- Recognition as a “Centre of Expertise” –contributing to building capacity of educators in the system
- Community partnerships that enrich the lives of students

We value continuity through:

- Delivery of curriculum through a continuum
- A whole school approach to School Wide Positive Behaviour Support
- Transition and pathway planning from pre-school through to post school
- A stable and committed workforce

3. Wellbeing and engagement strategies

Sunbury and Macedon Ranges Specialist 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.

Universal

Universal Interventions are universal in design and are intended to provide a preventative framework for all student support.

Strategies are included below:

- all students are supported to engage fully in their learning and school activities in accordance with the Department's policy on Students with Disability through reasonable adjustments to support access to learning programs, consultation with families, Student Support Groups, and Individual Education Plans
- high and consistent expectations of all staff, students and parents /carers
- School-wide Positive Behaviour Supports (SWPBS), which aim to create a positive school climate, a culture of student competence and an open, responsive management system for all school community members
- 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
- specialist training and refreshers for all staff in SWPBS and trauma informed practices
- 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,
- deliver a broad curriculum including VET programs, VPC to ensure that students are able to choose subjects and programs that are tailored to their interests, strengths and aspirations
- teachers at Sunbury and Macedon Ranges Specialist school use 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 Sunbury and Macedon Ranges 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 and School Philosophy 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 such as , prep transition program , year 7 transition program, visits to postschool options
- 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, cohort and individual level

- students have the opportunity to contribute to and provide feedback on decisions about school operations through the student school council and SSG meeting. Students are also encouraged to speak with their teachers, Subschool leaders, Assistant Principal and Principal whenever they have any questions or concerns.
- create opportunities for cross—age through whole school events such as Footy Day, Soccer Day, community access visits, Prep and year 7 transition program
- all students are welcome to self-refer to the Student Wellbeing Coordinator, School Nurse, Sub- School leader , 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, which includes programs such as:
 - Respectful Relationships
 - Bully Stoppers
 - Safe Schools
- programs, incursions and excursions developed to address issue specific needs or behaviour (i.e. eSmart, Bully stoppers)
- opportunities for student inclusion (i.e. sports teams, clubs, recess and lunchtime activities)

Targeted

- 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 education plans
- Comprehensive Health and Human Relations curriculum which 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.
- A Wellbeing team will monitor the health and wellbeing of students, and identify students who may need additional support
- Koorie students will be 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
- we support learning and wellbeing outcomes of students from refugee background through our Health and Human Relations curriculum
- All cultural and linguistical students are supported to feel safe and included in our school
- we provide a positive and respectful learning environment for our students who identify as LGBTIQ+ and follow the Department's policy on LGBTIQ 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
- The Wellbeing and therapy team will undertake professional learning and links to evidence based practises to promote student health, 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 Berry Street Model/approach to working with students who have experienced trauma.
- The Therapy team implement programs such as ; Zones of Regulation individual therapy programs
- 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
- SMRSS School assists students and their families to plan work experience

Individual:

Sunbury and Macedon Ranges Specialist school implements a range of strategies that support and promote individual engagement. These can include:

- building constructive relationships with students at risk or 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 Child First
 - 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 care team / professional meetings involving the family, and other professionals
- [Student Support Groups](#)
- [Individual Education Plans](#)
- [Behaviour - Students](#)
- [Behaviour Support Plans](#)
- [Student Support Services](#)

as well as to other Department programs and services such as:

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

4. Identifying students in need of support

Sunbury and Macedon Ranges Specialist school is committed to providing the necessary support to ensure our students are supported intellectually, emotionally and socially. The

Wellbeing team, alongside the Therapy and leadership team play a significant role in developing and implementing strategies help identify students in need of support and enhance student wellbeing.

Sunbury and Macedon Ranges 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 records
- Building constructive relationships with student at risk or students who are vulnerable due to complex individual circumstances
- Engagement with families
- Develop IEP and /or a behaviour Support Plan
- Wellbeing and confidential notes on XUNO
- Being responsive to changes in the student's circumstances and health and wellbeing
- observations by school staff such as changes in engagement, behaviour, self-care, social connectedness and motivation
- Referring the student to
 - School base wellbeing supports
 - Student support services
 - Appropriate external supports such as youth and family services, headspace, child mental health services and child first
 - Engagement programs such as Navigator

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, 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.

6. Student behavioural expectations and support

Sunbury and Macedon Ranges Specialist School's values are Consistency, Credibility and Continuity. Sunbury and Macedon Ranges Specialist School acknowledges that the behaviour of staff, parents, carers and students has an impact on our school community and culture. We acknowledge a shared responsibility to create a positive learning environment for the children and young people at our school. We value the consistency of a shared

understanding of practice including a whole school approach to School Wide Positive Behavior Support.

BEHAVIOURAL EXPECTATIONS

When a student displays distress or disengage behaviour within our school community, Sunbury and Macedon Ranges will institute a re-engagement staged response, consistent with the Department's policies on Student engagement and Inclusion guidelines. Where appropriate, parents will be informed about the inappropriate behaviour and support strategies implemented by teachers and other staff at the school (including Allied Health and Wellbeing)

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 our Bullying Prevention Policy.

When a student acts in breach of the behaviour standards of our school community. Sunbury and Macedon Ranges Specialist school institute a staged response consistent with department polices on behaviour, discipline and student wellbeing and engagement. Where appropriate parents/carers will be informed about inappropriate behaviour and supportive strategies/ actions taken by teachers and other school staff to address such behaviours.

Our school considers, explores and implement positive and non-punitive interventions to support student behaviour. Staff at Sunbury and Macedon Ranges Specialist School are trained in School Wide Positive Support framework and regularly discuss, devise and implement positive and non-punitive inventions to influence positive student behaviours. Disciplinary measures such as withdrawal of privileges, or withdrawal from class are considered a last resort and are implemented after consultation with the leadership or wellbeing team.

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.

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 Sunbury and Macedon Ranges Specialist 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

7. Engaging with families

Sunbury and Macedon Ranges 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

- 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 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.

8.Evaluation

Sunbury and Macedon Ranges Specialist 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 Support group meeting feedback
- student survey data
- incidents data
- school reports
- parent survey
- case management
- CASES21, including attendance and absence data
- SOCS

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

POLICY REVIEW AND APPROVAL

Policy last reviewed	September 2024
Consultation	School council. Link in school newsletter
Approved by	Principal
Next scheduled review date	September 2026