

Doncaster Gardens Primary School

Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy

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.

Doncaster Gardens 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 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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POLICY

1. School profile

DGPS, established in 1997 when Waldau and Doncaster East Primary Schools merged to become Doncaster Gardens, is located in a residential area of Doncaster East. The school's guiding principle is to be the 'best we can be'. The school grounds are compact and include both purpose built learning spaces and various areas adapted to cater for the student enrolment. An example is the Senior Learning Unit designed to promote a collaborative and flexible learning community. Specialist classes are provided in Performing Arts, Music, Visual Art, LOTE (Mandarin), STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering & Mathematics) and library. A broad range of extra-curricular activities that include chess, instrumental music, dance, orchestra, choir, electronics, art club and sport are offered. Our school is culturally diverse with 50% of our students from English as Additional Language backgrounds. We strive to provide a nurturing and challenging environment that empowers students to reach their personal best, both academically and socially.

2. School values, philosophy and vision

Doncaster Gardens Primary 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 of courage, creativity, compassion and curiosity at every opportunity.

Philosophy

At DGPS we believe that teaching and learning occurs in a secure, harmonious, stimulating and challenging environment.

Mission

To provide high quality, engaging programs which promote curiosity, creativity and inquiry.

Vision

To facilitate the development of well-adjusted and unique citizens who will succeed in life and actively contribute to the betterment of the global community.

3. Engagement strategies

At DGPS we provide a dynamic learning environment that engages students to achieve their personal best by extending and supporting them in their endeavours. We will provide programs to allow students to become effective and productive members of a multicultural and technologically advancing local and global community. We will further improve engagement and wellbeing of all students by explicitly planning for greater levels of curriculum innovation, student independence and interdependence and development of flexible, physical learning environments.

Doncaster Gardens will further improve engagement of all students through:

- curriculum innovation
- the development of student independence and interdependence
- the development of flexible physical learning environments
- personalising the learning of every student according to his/her needs
- teaching the students to set high but achievable goals for themselves
- encouraging the students to adopt a 'lifelong learner' mindset
- fostering student responsibility and student voice
- Circles and Restorative Practice strategies in all classrooms
- personalising the learning
- student goal and target setting
- student Welfare programs such as Bounce Back and Challenges and Choices
- age appropriate social skills programs
- a range of forums where parents and the wider community can interact with the school, including parent/teacher interviews, information nights, family curriculum nights and open days.
- connecting all Koorie students with a Koorie Engagement Support Officer

Other strategies that will support student engagement include:

- all students in Out of Home Care will be appointed a Learning Mentor, have an Individual Learning Plan and will be referred to Student Support Services for an Educational Needs Assessment
- the core values of Compassion, Courage, Curiosity and Creativity will be purposefully assimilated into all aspects of school life, and will be periodically reviewed
- each year group has a Year Group Leader/Coordinator, a senior teacher responsible for their year, who monitor the health and wellbeing of students in their year, and act as a point of contact for students who may need additional support
- wellbeing and health staff 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

At DGPS, we ensure that individual student welfare needs are attended to. Some of the ways we do this are through:

- Student Support Groups
- Individual Learning Plan and Behaviour Support Plan
- Program for Students with Disabilities
- referral to Student Welfare Coordinator and Student Support Services
- referral to ChildFirst, Headspace

DGPS 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 ChildFirst
 - 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
- 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.

4. Identifying students in need of support

DGPS 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 to help identify students in need of support and enhance student wellbeing. We 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.

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.

6. Student behavioural expectations

Behavioural expectations of students, staff and families are grounded in our school's Code of Conduct. Student bullying behaviour will be responded to consistently with Doncaster Gardens Primary School's Anti-Bullying policy and Behaviour Plan.

When a student acts in breach of the behaviour standards of our school community, DGPS will institute a staged response, consistent with the Department's Student Engagement and Inclusion Guidelines. Where appropriate, parents will be informed about the inappropriate behaviour and the disciplinary action taken by teachers and other school staff.

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
- restorative practices
- detentions
- behaviour reviews
- suspension
- expulsion

Suspension and expulsion are measures of last resort and may only be used in particular situations consistent with Department policy, available at:

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/participation/pages/engagement.aspx>

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

7. Engaging with families

DGPS 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 upon request
- 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.

8. Evaluation

DGPS 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 may be assessed on an annual basis include:

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

Related Policies:

- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Child Safe Policy
- Volunteers Policy
- Working With Children's Check Policy
- Inclusion and Diversity Policy
- Mandatory Reporting Policy
- Attendance Policy

REVIEW CYCLE

This policy was last approved by School Council on 27 November 2018 and is scheduled for review in November 2021.