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**STUDENT WELLBEING AND   
ENGAGEMENT POLICY**

**Help for non-English speakers**

If you need help to understand the information in this policy please contact the Principal. Ph. 9842 3373

**Purpose**

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

1. our commitment to providing a safe and supportive learning environment for students
2. expectations for positive student behaviour
3. support available to students and families
4. our school’s policies and procedures for responding to inappropriate student behaviour.

Donvale 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.

**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**

Donvale PS is an attractive school located at 4 Elata Street in the leafy northeast suburb of Donvale, shire of Manningham. The school is committed to serving the community and is known for its strong community connections and sense of belonging.

A total of 300 students were enrolled at Donvale PS in 2024, 50.5% are female & 49.5% are male. 36.12 percent of students speak a language other than English at home and 0% percent were Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander. The school's overall socio-economic profile is based on the school's Student Family Occupation and Education index (SFOE) which considers parents' occupations and education. Donvale PS's socio-economic band value is 'Low' which represents a low level of disadvantage.

1. **School values, philosophy and vision**

Donvale Primary School provides an inclusive, caring and rigorous learning environment that engages our students and challenges them to grow academically, socially, emotionally, physically and creatively to achieve their full potential. At Donvale Primary School we empower all students to embrace learning and build confidence through differentiated teaching and learning practices enabling students to achieve their personal best. Collective pride and a sense of responsibility for all students promote high student achievement and student engagement.

Donvale 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 Respect, Responsibility, Resilience, Compassion and Gratitude at every opportunity.

The school philosophy is based on the belief that all students, including those on the Program for Students with Disabilities, have the ability to achieve their full potential. There is a strong focus on the individual development of all children with an emphasis on the development of Literacy and Numeracy competencies. Programs promote self-esteem, individuality and creativity so that the physical, emotional, social and intellectual needs of the students are catered for. Student Welfare has a high priority with a whole school approach to discipline encompassing the Resilience Project and School Wide Positive Behaviour philosophies that emphasise student physical, emotional and social well-being, while supporting anti-bullying and student engagement.

Our [Statement of Values](http://donvaleps.vic.edu.au/wp-content/uploads/2011/03/DPS-Statement-of-Vision-and-Values-Promoting-Healthy-Safe-and-Respectful-Communities1.pdf) is available here and link to our DPS Statement of Values and School Philosophy Policy is below.

<http://donvaleps.vic.edu.au/wp-content/uploads/2011/03/DPS-Statement-Of-Values-and-School-Philosophy-Policy-20222.pdf>

1. **Wellbeing and engagement strategies**

Donvale Primary School has developed a range of strategies to promote engagement, positive behaviour and respectful relationships for all students in our school. 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 universal (whole of school) 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
* teachers at Donvale Primary 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 Donvale 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
* 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
* 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 Representative Council and other forums including year group meetings and Peer Support Groups. 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 school plays, athletics, music programs, peer support programs and House Matters
* all students are welcome to self-refer to the 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
  + The Resilience Project
  + School Wide Positive Behaviour Schools (SWPBS)
  + Peer Mediators
* programs, incursions and excursions developed to address issue specific needs or behaviour (i.e. anger management programs)
* opportunities for student inclusion (i.e. sports teams, clubs 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***

* 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
* our English as a second language students are supported through our EAL program, and all cultural and linguistically diverse students are supported to feel safe and included in our school including through a differentiated program that supports their specific needs
* we support learning and wellbeing outcomes of students from refugee background through the implementation of a differentiated program that supports their specific needs
* all students in Out of Home Care are supported in accordance with the Department’s policy on [Supporting Students in Out-of-Home Care](https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/supporting-students-out-home-care/policy) 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](https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/students-disability/policy), such as through reasonable adjustments to support access to learning programs, consultation with families and where required, student support groups and individual education plans
* 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
* 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](https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/international-student-program/guidance/supporting-students-learning-and-engagement-section-7).

***Individual***

Donvale Primary 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 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 Plan 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:
  + with a disability
  + in Out of Home Care
  + with other complex needs that require ongoing support and monitoring.

1. **Identifying students in need of support**

Donvale Primary 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 to help identify students in need of support and enhance student wellbeing. Donvale 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.

1. **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.

1. **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. 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, Donvale Primary School will institute a staged response, consistent with the Department’s policies on behaviour, discipline and student wellbeing and engagement. Where appropriate, parents will be informed about the inappropriate behaviour and the disciplinary action taken by teachers and other school staff.

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.

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 Principal and / or Assistant Principal
* restorative practices
* detentions
* 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 Donvale 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.

1. **Engaging with families**

Donvale 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
* 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.

1. **Evaluation**

Donvale 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
* SOCS

Donvale 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 and distributed to parents / carers via 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](https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/suspensions/guidance/1-suspension-process)
* [Expulsions - Decision](https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/expulsions/guidance/decision)

**Further information and resources**

The following Department of Education and Training policies are relevant to this Student Engagement and Wellbeing Policy:

* [Attendance](https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/attendance/policy)
* [Student Engagement](https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/student-engagement/policy)
* [Child Safe Standards](https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/child-safe-standards/policy)
* [Supporting Students in Out-of-Home Care](https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/supporting-students-out-home-care/policy)
* [Students with Disability](https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/students-disability/policy)
* [LGBTIQ Student Support](https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/lgbtiq-student-support/policy)
* [Behaviour - Students](https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/behaviour-students/policy)
* [Suspensions](https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/suspensions/policy)
* [Expulsions](https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/expulsions/policy)
* [Restraint and Seclusion](https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/restraint-seclusion/policy)

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**

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| Policy last reviewed | 28th May 2024 |
| Consultation | Education Sub-committee (June 2024)  School Council and Staff (June 2024)  School community via newsletter and Compass (June 2024) |
| Approved by | Principal and School Council |
| Next scheduled review date | June 2026 |