



## MORNINGTON SDS

# STUDENT WELLBEING & 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.

Mornington 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.

### 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
7. Engaging with families
8. Evaluation

### POLICY

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

## **School Profile**

Mornington Special Developmental School is a Specialist School that prides itself on being a welcoming and friendly school that caters for students with moderate to severe intellectual disabilities who reside on the Mornington Peninsula. The school is located beside Mornington Park Primary School, thus providing excellent opportunities to develop interaction and integration programs, which further enhance our school-based programs. We are a small, safe secure family-friendly school. All groups include 1 teacher and 1 ES (educational support) staff, with the student numbers averaging between 6-8 students per group. All programs are based on the belief that all students have the capacity to learn and can experience success. On this assumption, Mornington Special Developmental School aims to provide a friendly, safe, and structured learning environment within which students have the opportunity to prepare for and take up their rightful place in society. A fundamental element in achieving this broad aim is to ensure a positive and mutually supportive partnership between parents and staff, and effective communication between home and school is a key strategy in the school's operation.

## **School Values Philosophy and Vision**

Mornington SDS is committed to providing a safe, secure, and engaging learning environment. The school supports and encourages students to build on their strengths and individuality whilst providing opportunities for them to experience success in their learning and ensuring positive and mutually supportive partnerships between home, school, and the community. The school is committed to a philosophy of continuous improvement. Respect- Respect for self, others, and the environment Integrity- in what we do and relationships with others (Do the right thing) Responsibility- accept responsibility for one's own actions Persistence – to strive towards reaching our personal best.

## **Wellbeing and Engagement strategies**

Over the next four years this plan will strive and meet the following targets. By 2025, ninety per cent of Year F-10 students assessed against the Victorian Curriculum (VC) Levels A-10 will make or sustain learning level progress each school year during the SSP period in the VC Personal and Social Capability Strands of: • Self-Awareness and Management • Social Awareness and Management

By 2025, the percentage of students responding positively to the following student Attitudes to School Survey (AtSS) measures to be at or above 90 per cent: • Learner characteristics and disposition domain, Self-regulation, and goal setting factor • Student Safety domain, I feel safe at this school factor.

By 2025, the percentage of parents responding positively to the following Parent Opinion Survey (POS) Student Development domain measures to be at or above 80 per cent.

Goal 3. To improve student voice and agency in learning. Rationale The review Panel reasoned that the promotion and activation of student voice was a highlight of the previous SSP. The various initiatives that had been implemented had promoted student connectedness and positive behaviours. The Panel agreed that building on this momentum would be part of the new SSP. Over the next four years this plan will unfold by striving to meet the following targets. By 2025, the percentage of students responding positively to the following student Attitudes to School Survey (AtSS) Social engagement domain factors to be at or above 90 per cent: • Student voice and agency • Sense of inclusion • School connectedness By 2025, the percentage of parents responding positively to the following Parent Opinion Survey (POS) Student Development domain measures to be at or above 80 per cent: • Student agency and voice • Confidence and resiliency skills



Universal

# Mornington

## Special Developmental

### School

No. 5239

Robertson Drive,

Po Box 307 Mornington Vic 3931

Phone: (03) 5975 6111

Email: [mornington.sds@education.vic.gov.au](mailto:mornington.sds@education.vic.gov.au)

ABN 66 210 461 357

- *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*
- *deliver a broad curriculum including VET programs, VCE and VCAL to ensure that students can choose subjects and programs that are tailored to their interests, strengths, and aspirations.*
- *teachers at Mornington SDS 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 Mornington SDS 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 can 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 and peer support programs.*
- *students are welcome to self-refer to the Student Wellbeing Coordinator, School Nurse, Year Group Leaders, 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 or needs behaviour (i.e. anger management programs)*
- *opportunities for student inclusion (i.e. sports teams, clubs, recess 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**

Mornington 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 help identify students in need of support and enhance student wellbeing. We 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
- *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.*
- *we support learning and wellbeing outcomes of students from refugee background.*
- *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](#) *[insert any specific measures at your school to support LGBTIQ+ students]**
- *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 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](#)*



Mornington SDS 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 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 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.

### **3. Identifying students in need of support**

Mornington 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 help identify students in need of support and enhance student wellbeing. Example School will utilise the following information and tools to identify students in need of extra emotional, social, or educational support:

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- attendance, detention, and suspension data
- engagement with families

#### **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**

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 Mornington SDS Bullying Prevention Policy.

When a student acts in breach of the behaviour standards of our school community, Mornington SDS 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*
- *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 Mornington SDS 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**

Mornington 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.

## **7. Evaluation**

Mornington 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

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

## POLICY REVIEW AND APPROVAL

Policy last reviewed	18 <sup>th</sup> October 2023
Consultation	School Council December 2023 Student Voice October 2023 Principal October 2023
Approved by	Principal
Next scheduled review date	October 2025