

# 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.

Skene Street 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 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

*Skene Street Specialist School is a Government, dual mode specialist school providing educational opportunities to students within our region aged between 5-18, who have a diagnosed intellectual disability. The school is located in Stawell and sits on the traditional lands of the Djab Warrung and Jadawadjali people, at the foothills of the Grampians National Park (Gariwerd). The student cohort are drawn from local towns including Stawell, Ararat, Landsborough, Navarre, Willaura and other local communities.*

*The school is a purpose-built facility which opened in 2011, designed to meet the needs of our students. The school is centrally located allowing easy access to Stawell's shopping precinct, community services and recreational facilities that staff utilise weekly to broaden student learning and engage with the local community.*

*Staff/pupil ratios are a priority and we support students with as much staff assistance as possible. Our 2022 enrolment is 56 students and a staff team of 31.*

*The school provides an approved curriculum framework differentiated to meet student needs. We implement appropriate sections of the Victorian Curriculum Levels A to D./Foundation–Year 10. Each student has an Individual Education Plan (IEP) that highlight skill acquisition tasks that are designed to be worthwhile, challenging and achievable. Our specialist programs for 2022 include Work Futures, Riding for the Disabled, Community Access, Developmental Learning Skills, Physical Education, Visual and Performing Arts, Swimming, Choir and Physiotherapy.*

*Our school is committed to creating and maintaining a safe and supportive environment in which our students can acquire the skills and confidence they will need when transitioning from school to post school life. We implement the School Wide Positive Behaviour Support model to specifically teach and instil the school's core values of Be Safe, Be respectful, Be Responsible, Be a Learner.*

*A major focus for our school is to be as involved and active within our local communities as possible and to promote inclusion and diversity within our everyday practice. Close connections with schools within our local and wider network are valued, with joint activities, shared professional learning and school visits for staff and students undertaken whenever possible.*

*Embracing our school motto...See Me As I Am... has created a culture of trust and mutual respect amongst our staff, students and wider school community.*

### 2. School values, philosophy and vision

Skene Street Specialist 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, integrity and kindness at every opportunity.

Our vision is to continue "...to deliver a high quality, individualised program to allow students to reach their personal best and embrace our school motto- **'See me as I am'**".

Skene Street Specialist School's values are: **Be Respectful Be Responsible Be Safe Be a Learner**  
Further information included in our "School Wide Positive Behaviour Support – Social Skills Framework" document.

*Our Statement of Values is available online at: [www.skenesds.vic.edu.au](http://www.skenesds.vic.edu.au)*

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### **3. Engagement strategies**

Skene Street Specialist 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), targeted (class group specific) 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
  - 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 to ensure that students are able to choose subjects and programs that are tailored to their interests, strengths and aspirations
  - teachers at Skene Street Specialist School use an E5 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 Skene Street 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 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, primarily through our SWPBS 'GOTCHA' system, 'Aussie of the Month' 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 junior School Council. Students are also encouraged to speak with their teachers, ES staff and Principal whenever they have any questions or concerns.
  - create opportunities for cross—age connections amongst students through playground interaction, joint activities and peer support programs
  - All students are welcome to self-refer to class teachers and ES staff, School Chaplain, 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
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- we engage in school wide positive behaviour support with our staff and students, which includes programs such as:
  - SWPBS
  - Respectful Relationships
  - The Resilience Project
  - The Berry Street Model
  - Be You training
- programs, incursions and excursions developed to address issue specific behaviour, such as self-regulation and appropriate social interactions.
- opportunities for student inclusion (i.e. inter school activities, sporting activities)

### Targeted

- each classroom teacher responsible for their class, through monitoring the health and wellbeing of their students, and act as a point of contact for students who may need additional support
- 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
- all students in Out of Home Care will be appointed a Learning Mentor, have an Individual Learning Plan and a Student Support Group (SSG)
- Skene Street Specialist School assists students to plan and participate in Vocational Educational activities both on and off site.
- 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

### Individual

Skene Street Specialist 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

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- 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

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.

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

Skene Street Specialist School is committed to providing the necessary support to ensure our students are supported intellectually, emotionally and socially. The whole staff team plays a significant role in developing and implementing strategies help identify students in need of support and enhance student wellbeing. Skene Street 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 performance
- observations by school staff such as changes in engagement, behaviour, self-care, social connectedness and motivation
- attendance 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.
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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, the school Chaplain or principal.

## **6. Student behavioural expectations and support**

Behavioural expectations of students, staff and families are grounded in our school's Statement of Values. Student bullying behaviour will be responded to consistently with Skene Street Specialist School's Bullying policy.

When a student acts in breach of the behaviour standards of our school community, Skene Street Specialist 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 (Warn, Warn, Respond, Act)
- 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>
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- <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 Skene Street Specialist School is responsible for ensuring all suspensions and expulsions are recorded on CASES21.

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

## **7. Engaging with families**

Skene Street 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 opportunities so that families can contribute to school 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**

Skene Street Specialist 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

Skene Street Specialist 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

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- 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**

[Statement-Of-Values-And-School-Philosophy-Policy-2022.Pdf](#)

[Bullying Prevention Policy 2022.Pdf](#)

[Child Safety And Wellbeing Policy 2022.Pdf](#)

## **POLICY REVIEW AND APPROVAL**

Policy last reviewed	August 2022
Consultation	School Council 2 <sup>nd</sup> August
Approved by	Principal
Next scheduled review date	August 2024

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