



DANDENONG HIGH SCHOOL

STUDENT ENGAGEMENT AND WELLBEING 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.

Dandenong High 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

1. SCHOOL PROFILE

Established in 1919, Dandenong High School is one of the oldest, largest and most culturally diverse Secondary Schools in the state. Located in the South East of Melbourne, Dandenong High School is a co-educational school from Years 7 to 12 with an enrolment of approximately 1500 students. The school is highly multicultural with 77 nationalities and 83 different language groups represented and have a team of 150 teaching and 70 non-teaching staff.

Dandenong High School has an enrolment of 1500 students with approximately 230 at each Year level. In order to ensure students develop a deep sense of belonging and connectedness to the school, teachers and fellow students, we have created a highly unique vertically structured House model. Within each House, which is a state-of-the art designed Learning Centre, there are up to 300 students, 50 from each Year level from Year 7 through to Year 12, 25 teaching staff from across all Domains and teaching areas, a House Leadership Team of three and an Attendance Officer. In Years 7 - 9, students learn primarily in the purposefully designed and ICT rich learning spaces within the House for their core learning, moving to specialist learning spaces when required. Students have the opportunity to develop meaningful relationships with the teams of teachers within the House. Parents can communicate regularly with the House Leadership Team and the vertical structure encourages peer tutoring and mentoring across Years 7 - 12.

2. VISION, VALUES AND PHILOSOPHY

VISION

The vision for Dandenong High School is one in which all students are empowered and achieve success. As an outstanding educational setting, we will exemplify excellence and high expectations in all aspects of our learning community. We will ensure that the diverse needs, achievements and strengths of every individual are recognised, nurtured and celebrated. We foster a supportive environment, building on the strengths within our unique community. Our key focus will be the development of independent, reflective, responsible and inquiring young people. Our students will be multi-skilled; ICT enabled and will embody a genuine passion for lifelong learning.

VALUES AND SHARED EXPECTATIONS

Curiosity – instilling a love of learning and a sense of wonder within all members of the learning community

Respect – developing an understanding that all individuals are unique and can make valuable contributions to the community

Compassion and Empathy – fostering respectful and supportive partnerships between students, parents, teachers and the wider community on their learning journey

Excellence – empowering all students to achieve and celebrate their personal best within a culture of high expectations

Perseverance – building a sense of determination and optimism when faced with challenges in learning and life

Inclusiveness – promoting a sense of belonging through collaboration and mutual respect based on the principles of integrity, honesty and trust

PHILOSOPHY

In a technologically advanced and increasingly complex global community, Dandenong High School will provide all students with the skills, knowledge and wisdom to be successful learners, confident individuals and informed citizens. The provision of an innovative, inclusive and inspiring curriculum will enable Dandenong High School to inclusively support the great diversity of individual needs. Learning will be meaningful, ICT rich and integrated across all aspects of our students' lives.

We are a learning community that embodies a genuine sense of tolerance and the celebration of diversity. Dandenong High School is a richly multicultural educational setting which promotes collaboration, acceptance, respect and individuality. We are fundamentally linked to the local, wider and global community and actively prepare our students to contribute to each as informed, empowered and empathetic citizens.

3. WELLBEING AND ENGAGEMENT STRATEGIES

At Dandenong High School we believe that Student Engagement will be most effective when it focuses on:

- creating a positive school culture that is fair and respectful
- building a safe and supportive school environment
- expecting positive, supportive and respectful relationships that value diversity
- promoting pro-social values and behaviours
- encouraging student participation and student voice
- actively engaging with parents, guardians and carers
- implementing preventative and early intervention approaches
- responding to individual students
- linking to the local community.

A summary of the universal (whole of school), targeted (year group specific) and individual engagement strategies used by our school is included below:

a. 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
- deliver a broad curriculum including VET programs, VCE and VCAL to ensure that students are able to choose subjects and programs that are tailored to their interests, strengths and aspirations
- teachers at Dandenong High School use the Design for Learning 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 Dandenong High 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. Students are encouraged to speak with their teachers, House leadership Team, Associate Principals 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
- all students are welcome to self-refer to the Student Support Services Team which includes Student Counsellors, Mental Health Practitioner and School Nurse 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 a 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
 - Safe Schools
- programs, incursions and excursions developed to address issue specific needs or behaviour
- opportunities for student inclusion (i.e. sports teams, clubs, recess and lunchtime activities)
- 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.

SCHOOL CURRICULUM

The curriculum at Dandenong High School is aimed at engaging all students and to challenge them to achieve their full potential. In the Junior Years (7, 8 and 9) students study a wide range of subjects and electives. They are expected to develop key skills, key knowledge and key understandings as they progress through each year level.

The Year 10 learning program is aligned with Senior Studies. Students at Dandenong High School will therefore undertake a three-year Senior Studies program, which will provide our Year 10 students with an opportunity to undertake a wide variety of Year 10 subjects that provide greater depth in learning and targeted preparation for VCE. Furthermore, students will be able to access Unit 1 and 2 VCE subjects and VET Training Programs at the DREAM Centre at Chisholm TAFE. The Year 10 Program will ensure our students are able to make informed pathway choices, supported through a personalised Careers Counselling process, which will empower all students to achieve ultimate success.

HOUSE SYSTEM

At Dandenong High School the school is broken into 7 Houses which are two storey buildings consisting of a House Leadership team (Assistant Principal/Assistant House Leader/House Coordinator/House Support Officer). There is also 25 staff and 300 students (up to 50 from each year level) based in each House. Student who enter a House in Year 7 remain in that House until Year 12. This enables each student to receive the necessary individual support that they require and to build strong connections from within their year level group and across age groups as well as with the staff members attached to each House.

b. TARGETTED

- each House has a Leadership Team made up of a House Leader (Assistant Principal), an Assistant House Leader (Leading Teacher), an Environment Coordinator and a House Administration Officer responsible for their House, who monitor the health and wellbeing of students in their House, 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.
- 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
- we support learning and wellbeing outcomes of students from refugee background through Transition EAL Liaison Manager and our relationship with Foundation House
- 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
- 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 Analysis
- 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](#)
- 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
- Dandenong High School assists students to plan their Year 10 work experience, supported by their Career Action Plan

c. INDIVIDUAL

Dandenong High 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 Education Plan and/or a Behaviour Support Plan
(An IEP is a written statement that describes the adjustments, goals and strategies to meet a student's individual educational needs so they can reach their full potential. An IEP is essential

as it helps you plan and monitor a student's unique learning needs.) Link - <https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/individual-education-plans-ieps/policy> (A Behaviour Support Plan outlines the specific strategies and responsibilities for a student's behaviour and the responses to that behaviour. Each plan is developed in consultation with parents and in response to the specific behaviours of each individual student)

- 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 Orange Door
 - Re-engagement programs such as Navigator - <https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/navigator-program/policy>

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.

4. IDENTIFYING STUDENTS IN NEED OF SUPPORT

Dandenong High School is committed to providing the necessary support to ensure our students are supported intellectually, emotionally and socially. The Student Support Services team plays a significant role in developing and implementing strategies, identify students in need of support and enhance student wellbeing. Dandenong High 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
- referrals from House Leadership Team staff

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 member of their House Leadership Team, a member of the Student Support Services Team or a trusted teacher. Further information about raising a complaint or concern is available in our Complaints Policy.

6. STUDENT BEHAVIOURAL EXPECTATIONS AND MANAGEMENT

Behavioural expectations of students are grounded in our school's Statement of Values and Shared Expectations and our Community Commitment.

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, Dandenong High School will institute a staged response, consistent with the Department's policies on behaviour, 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.

School 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 House Leadership Teams
- restorative practices
- detentions
- behaviour support and intervention meetings with Parent/Carer involvement
- 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>

The Principal of Dandenong High 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

Dandenong High 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 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

Dandenong High 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

Dandenong High 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 through Compass
- Included in staff induction processes
- 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 and Wellbeing Policy
- Bullying Prevention Policy
- Inclusion and Diversity Policy
- Statement of Values and School Philosophy

POLICY REVIEW AND APPROVAL

Policy last reviewed	June 2023
Consultation	School Council, Compass and Newsletter notification
Approved by	Principal
School Council Endorsement Date	June 2023
Next scheduled review date	June 2025