



# Doreen Primary School

## Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy



### HELP FOR NON-ENGLISH SPEAKERS

If you need help to understand the information in this policy, please contact Doreen Primary School on 03 9717 3563 or [doreen.ps@education.vic.gov.au](mailto:doreen.ps@education.vic.gov.au).

### 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.

Doreen 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.

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2. School values, philosophy and vision
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### POLICY

#### 1. School profile

Doreen Primary School is a small semi rural school located 40km north east of Melbourne in the foothills of the Great Dividing Range. Its enrolment over the past 10 years has increased from 100 – 162 students. In 2022 it reached its highest enrolment ever of 167 students and has an enrolment cap of 150.

The school has been a focal point in the community for the last 155 years, both as an educational facility and a community meeting place. With the development of housing estates taking place in the area, the population centre

will move away from this setting, with children coming to school by parent transport. Since the development of the first school charter, the enrolment catchment for the school has shown a higher percentage of children from the immediate local area. With development in the local area, enrolments will continue at these levels. Along with the existence of 2 independent P-12 schools within 3km of the school, it means the school must continue to cultivate its reputation in the area as a quality educational setting. This could potentially mean a drop in the intake area of this school, but as it is a relatively small school, it attracts parents looking for this type of environment. Our school has always been actively involved in providing a safe, positive and supportive environment so each individual can reach their full potential. We aim to ensure that our school is looked upon as an extended family environment. At Doreen we believe that education is a partnership between the school, the parents and the community. Development of Student Leadership is entrenched in our culture, and is being developed with focused programs for all older students. Results from surveys conducted for the recent school review indicate the school community values the focus on developing students on a personal basis as well as academically, and that we are doing it well.

Within this environment we encourage students to develop self-discipline, cooperative attitudes, to take pride in their school and their work, to respect others, and to value their achievements. We aim for children to achieve the skills and attitudes necessary to make positive and informed decisions in all aspects of their future. A Junior School Council operates effectively, and children are involved regularly in the development of the Student Code of Conduct. Involvement of the stakeholders in our school is always a focus. The school aims to provide learning experiences in all areas of the Victorian Curriculum as required by the Victorian government. A focus on sequential and developmental programs in literacy and numeracy that are consistent across the whole school is encouraged, and Early and Middle Years programs running throughout the School. A Language Intervention program providing a safety net for children at risk runs from P-6. Specialist programs are also run in Music, Art, L.O.T.E. (AUSLAN), PHYS. ED. and Library by means of the school Library visit and a lunch time borrowing system. Swimming, camps, Bike Education, Science, Phys. Ed. and excursions are also integral parts of our program. Our school often combines with other small schools in our area to access additional activities such as interschool sport, cultural experiences and to provide additional opportunity for social interaction. Professional development for staff is also a product of this cooperation. A collegiate group for principals of like schools, and regular teacher PLT's, Curriculum Days, ESO and Bursar groups mean staff isolation is reduced as much as possible, and PD on a wider basis is given.

The school playground provides a large, diverse and interesting environment for children to experience, with features such as a basketball court, a sports field, grassed and paved areas, along with many mature and historically valuable trees. The school buildings are comprised of seven general classrooms, specialist Art/Craft/Music rooms, library, kitchen, office, and staffroom. Children have access to learning and information technologies regularly, with a focussed skill program ensuring all children can effectively make use of these valuable resources. These facilities provide a stimulating and well resourced learning environment. The school community work together to ensure that facilities are maintained, at a high standard. Our funding resources are maximised in this area by the enthusiastic involvement of our school families. A School Facilities Master Plan has been funded and produced to cater for the growth in students, and allows for facility changes which are both functional and environmentally sound. Solar panels, water tanks and sewerage treatment focus on a small environmental footprint.

As Doreen Primary School is located in a growth corridor, the School Council is continually assessing school and students needs; planning future developments; and is dedicated to bringing quality education to our students. The Facilities Master Plan was developed to ensure the school is able to respond to enrolment growth in a manner which will not endanger its current culture and atmosphere, which has attracted the current school community. Many current members of the community see the growth of the student population as putting the current culture at risk. This is a management challenge: to keep the present school culture whilst assimilating growth. A recent State government allocation of \$5.387 Million for building upgrades has been a recent positive development around our school.

## 2. School values, philosophy and vision

- Doreen Primary School is committed to providing a safe, supportive and inclusive environment for all students, staff and members of our community. Our school recognises the importance of the partnership between our school and parents and carers to support student learning, engagement and wellbeing. We share a commitment to, and a responsibility for, creating an inclusive and safe school environment for our students. The programs and teaching at Doreen Primary School support and promote the principles and practice of Australian democracy, including a commitment to:
  - elected government
  - the rule of law
  - equal rights for all before the law
  - freedom of religion
  - freedom of speech and association
  - the values of openness and tolerance.

This policy outlines our school's vision, mission, objective, values and expectations of our school community. This policy is available on our school website and enrolment/transition packs. To celebrate and embed our Statement of Values and Philosophy in our school community, we

- display posters and banners that promote your values in our school
- celebrate our values in our school newsletter
- provide awards and recognition for students who actively demonstrate the values.
- discuss our values with students in the classroom, meetings and assemblies.

Doreen Primary School's vision is to provide and foster an environment that provides children with opportunity to reach their full potential, no matter what challenges they face. Doreen Primary School's mission is to provide children with the skills and attitude that will mean they are lifelong learners.

It also recognizes that academic learning and growth are not the only measures and needs a child will need. The Arts, Sport, ICT skills and Leadership are also important components of a child's development.

At Doreen Primary School, our aim is to provide a safe and supportive environment for the whole school community that encourages independence in social and academic situations; fosters positive risk taking; develops and nurtures resilience; provides an environment where both positive and negative consequences of actions are respected; values respect for all members of the community; fosters the notion that a student's best efforts are an achievement they should aim for and be proud of; and includes all stakeholders in decision making.

Doreen Primary School's values are the foundation for developing a culture at this school, and are a product of students, parents and staff all contributing to a request for their thoughts. This process means the school community feels valued, safe, listened to, and part of the school's rich fabric

## 3. Wellbeing and engagement strategies

The creation of a positive school culture that is fair and respectful for all is a must for a school to be an effective learning environment. At Doreen Primary School student engagement, regular attendance, punctuality, behaviour and parent participation are actively promoted in the School Newsletter; on the School Website; as well as at assemblies, concerts and Public Meetings.

At Doreen Primary School we endeavour to provide our students with a secure learning environment free from harassment, and one in which individuals are treated with respect, courtesy and care. These expectations are extended to include teachers and parents. Developing a supportive learning environment is a focus, where children are encouraged to be independent, resilient and diligent people. The concept of "my best is good enough" is

mandated, and children are encouraged to develop goals and plans to achieve positive outcomes. Consequences of actions are not only seen as a result of poor behaviour, but the good things that happen when a child achieves a good result. Whilst physical rewards in the form of certificates and awards are present in the school, the values of intrinsic rewards are always promoted. Children are encouraged to enjoy their successes by their peers, teachers and parents.

Restorative Practice is the first action taken by staff when dealing with altercations and problems in the school. The focus on children understanding the position of their peers in a dispute creates understanding and empathy between children, a positive in any school yard. School programs are focussed on allowing children to reach their full potential across many curriculum areas. The Curriculum at this school is rich and diverse, allowing for the diverse talents and interests of our students. The school has a Teaching and learning Policy which promotes sequential, developmental programs which call on teachers to use a variety of methods to engage and educate their students. Explicit teaching is the skeleton to all programs, with the use of ICT among the many resources used to enhance concepts and skills.

The education process is seen as a seven year progression at Doreen Primary School, where the outcomes of our students are seen as paramount in all decision making. Repeat years are an option, as are intervention programs and extension activities. All programs are held to account against student engagement and student outcomes, as well as effectiveness. Junior School Council is an area that brings student voice into the school. It is promoted, valued and an activity that enjoys the physical presence of all students in a meeting once a week, with elected Student Leaders in charge. Children not only deal with local issues, but raise money for charities, events, a school pet and a sponsored child in Cambodia. Doreen Primary School has developed a range of strategies to promote engagement, an inclusive and safe environment, positive behaviour, and respectful relationships for all students in our school. We recognise the importance of student friendships and peer support in helping children and students feel safe and less isolated. 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 and individual engagement strategies used by our school is included below:

### ***Universal***

High and consistent expectations of all staff, students and parents and carers

- Prioritising 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 Doreen Primary School use a School based and formulated 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 Doreen 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 support students moving into different stages of their schooling
- Acknowledging positive behaviour and student achievement in the classroom, and formally in school assemblies and communication to parents
- Monitoring 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 and other forums including year group meetings and Peer Support Groups. Students are also encouraged to speak with their teachers and Principal whenever they have any questions or concerns.
- Creating 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 Wellbeing Coordinator, Junior School Council or 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 needs or 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**

- 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 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 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

### **Individual**

Doreen 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 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

Doreen Primary School is committed to providing the necessary support to ensure our students are supported intellectually, emotionally and socially. All staff play a significant role in developing and implementing strategies help identify students in need of support and enhance student wellbeing. Doreen 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

#### 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 trusted teacher or a member of the school leadership team. 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/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, Doreen 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
- 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.

The Principal of Doreen 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.



## 7. Engaging with families

Doreen 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, 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

Doreen 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

Doreen 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

- 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/carers 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 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](#)
- [LGBTIQA+ 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	16-6-25
Consultation	Staff Meeting - Tuesday 10th June. School Council – Tuesday 17th June.
Approved by	Principal
Next scheduled review date	Before June 2027