



Together we Grow

South Gippsland Specialist School

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.

South Gippsland 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.

This policy applies to all school activities, including camps and excursions.

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1. School profile

South Gippsland Specialist School is located on the Leongatha Educational Precinct. The school community is committed to providing high quality educational opportunities for students aged between 5 and 18 years of age who have been diagnosed with an Intellectual Disability so that they become empowered members of their community. S.G.S.S. operates within a strong framework of values and behaviours based on Respect, Learning, Safety, Teamwork and Social Justice. Our school values are Be Friendly, Be safe, Be a Learner and Be Respectful.

School Wide Positive Behaviour Support Program

School-wide Positive Behaviour Support School-wide Positive Behaviour Support (SWPBS) is an evidence-based framework, which supports the school to creating a positive school climate and an open, responsive management system for all school community members. Under SWPBS the school is supported to develop of a set of behavioural expectations and procedures for explicitly teaching and promoting positive behaviour.



At South Gippsland Specialist School, the whole school community supports the use of positive behaviour support strategies to teach our students how to act in an appropriate manner. The Code of Conduct for students is consistent with DET guidelines and regulations and is based on the principles of: **Everyone has the right to learn, Everyone has the right to be safe, Everyone has the right to be respected by being friendly**

1. School vision

The South Gippsland Specialist School is committed to the provision of quality educational programs, teamwork, positive communication, respect for self and others and providing an inclusive environment for all.

2. School Mission

South Gippsland Specialist School is committed to developing our school community to be safe, friendly and respectful learners.

3. School Purpose

The South Gippsland Specialist School is committed to the provision of quality educational programs, teamwork, positive communication, respect for self and others and providing an inclusive environment for all.

We work together to provide quality learning opportunities for students that assist them to reach their full potential academically, socially, emotionally and physically.

Our school encourages staff and students to take pride in themselves and their school, to have high expectations and to value learning.

The South Gippsland Specialist School community will:

- Respect self and others.
- Provide a safe, challenging and creative school environment.
- Have a positive attitude toward learning.
- Encourage self-confidence and high self-esteem.
- Encourage and develop student independence.
- Provide care and support for each student.
- Raise self-esteem through successful experiences.
- Help students to achieve their personal potential.
- Show students that they can be a worthwhile member of their community.
- Provide an inclusive environment for all.
- Encourage community acceptance of disability and difference.

- Utilize current educational technologies.
- Implement positive open communication.
- Work collaboratively and contribute to the learning of others.

4. Engagement strategies

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, staff opinion survey, Students management data and school level assessment data
- deliver a broad curriculum to ensure that students are able to access subjects and programs that are tailored to their interests, strengths and aspirations
- teachers at South Gippsland Specialist School use the 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 South Gippsland Specialist School also use the schools MAPbook system for differentiated teaching of their identified goals
- teachers at South Gippsland 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, 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 also encouraged to speak with their teachers, Assistant Principal and Principal whenever they have any questions or concerns.
- create opportunities for cross—age connections amongst students through school productions, and precinct activities.
- All students are welcome to self-refer to the Student Wellbeing Coordinator, 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:
 - School Wide Positive Behaviour Support
 - Respectful Relationships
 - Bully Stoppers
 - Safe Schools

- Esmart
- programs, incursions and excursions developed to address issue specific behaviour (cyberbullying)
- opportunities for student inclusion (i.e. sports teams, clubs, recess and lunchtime activities)

Targeted

- All students have a Student Support Group, Personalised Learning Support Plan and a Student Wellbeing Plan.
- all students from the age of 15 and above will be assisted to develop a Career Action Plan, with targeted goals and support to plan for their future
- connect all Koorie students with a Koorie Engagement Support Officer
- all students in Out of Home Care will be appointed a Learning Mentor, have an Individual Learning Plan and will be referred to Student Support Services for an Educational Needs Assessment
- South Gippsland Specialist School assists students to plan their work experience, supported by their Career Action Plan when they turn 15 as deemed appropriate by the student support group.
- All staff will undertake health promotion and social skills development in response to needs identified by student wellbeing data each year
- staff will apply a trauma-informed approach to working with students who have experienced trauma

Individual

- Student Support Groups, see:
<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/participation/pages/supportgroups.aspx>
- Individual Program and Student Wellbeing Plan
- Program for Students with Disabilities
- referral to Student Welfare Coordinator and Student Support Services
- referral to ChildFirst, Headspace
- Navigator
- Lookout

South Gippsland 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 Program and Student Wellbeing 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
- running Student Support Group meetings for all students:
 - *with a disability*
 - *in Out of Home Care*
 - *and with other complex needs that require ongoing support and monitoring.*

5. Identifying students in need of support

South Gippsland Specialist 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 help identify students in need of support and enhance student wellbeing. South Gippsland 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, detention and suspension data
- engagement with families
- self-referrals or referrals from peers

6. 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.

Be Friendly
 Be Safe
 Be a Learner
 Be Respectful

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.

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.

7. Student behavioural expectations

Behavioural expectations of students, staff and families are grounded in our school's Statement of Values.

Be Friendly
Be Safe
Be a Learner
Be Respectful

Student bullying behaviour will be responded to consistently with South Gippsland Specialist School's Bullying policy.

When a student acts in breach of the behaviour standards of our school community, South Gippsland Specialist School will institute a staged response, consistent with the Department's Student Engagement and Inclusion Guidelines. Where appropriate, parents will be informed about the inappropriate behaviour and the disciplinary action taken by teachers and other school staff.

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
- restorative practices
- behaviour reviews and contracts
- Rest day at home
- suspension
- expulsion

Suspension and expulsion are measures of last resort and may only be used in particular situations consistent with Department policy, available at:

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/participation/pages/engagement.aspx>

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

8. Engaging with families

South Gippsland 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 parent volunteer 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.

9. Evaluation

South Gippsland 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 data
- case management
- CASES21

Evaluation

This policy will be reviewed as part of the school's three-year review cycle.

This policy was last updated on October 2019 and is scheduled for review in 2021