



Bendigo Special Developmental School

*“A place of excellence in education that creates
inclusive communities and success for all”*

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.

Bendigo Special Developmental 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

The Bendigo Special Developmental School provides education programs for school aged students 5 to 18 with a moderate to severe intellectual disability. Our students reside in the Bendigo Region encompassing Kyneton, Wedderburn, Heathcote and Huntly. The current enrolment is 157 students. The new school premises were established in Kangaroo Flat in September 2006.

DET and VCAA curriculum guidelines are followed at the school, with all students being taught seven subjects (the school is exempt from teaching languages) and four capabilities of the Victorian Curriculum. The Victorian Teaching and Learning Model is used to design and implement an individualised education plan for each student, coupled with a communication passport, which identifies a student's preferred communication system and skills. Staff work in Professional Learning Communities to collaboratively plan and moderate student learning and achievement.

Classrooms are stimulating and well equipped with an extensive range of educational equipment and communication aids. A hydrotherapy pool, spa room, gymnasium, student kitchen, and extensive bicycle track with a range of adapted bicycles, coupled with a specialised therapy and multi-purpose room enrich programs. Student health and safety is paramount, and a grounds master plan that maintains a secure and stimulating outdoor environment, with challenging play equipment and shade port sun protection make for engaging outdoor play spaces. The school has recently been officially given the name 'Manya' meaning 'Meeting Site' by the elders of the traditional land owners, the Dja Dja Wurrung, for the outdoor space located at the north end of the school.

Teamwork and communication between staff and parents is a priority. Student Support Group meetings are held each term and support the preparation and review of the Individual Education Plan. Parent and caregiver dialogue is supported by fortnightly newsletters, a Facebook page, and daily communication through either an app called SeeSaw or a student diary. An active parent and carer group called Parent 2 Parent meet fortnightly and Learning programs are additionally supported by the school's Physiotherapist, Occupational Therapist, Speech Therapist, Family Support Teacher and Mental Health Practitioner.

Several students are dual enrolled in mainstream schools for varying time fractions. Cooperative planning and programming between both educational settings and continual review and support of student progress are essential elements of the success and extension of these programs.

As a recognised resource for special education, the school provides an information, consultancy and professional development base for teachers, parents, tertiary students and other people involved in the disability field.

2. School values, philosophy and vision

Bendigo Special Developmental 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 kindness at every opportunity.

Our school's vision is *"A place of excellence in education that creates inclusive communities and success for all"*

Our School's values are

- *Driving learning growth.*
- *Uniting to achieve excellence.*
- *Valuing diversity with kindness and respect.*
- *Ensuring equity of opportunity.*

Our Statement of Values is available online at:

[\[https://www.bendigods.vic.edu.au/page/82/Message-from-the-Principal\]](https://www.bendigods.vic.edu.au/page/82/Message-from-the-Principal) .

3. Wellbeing and engagement strategies

Bendigo Special Developmental School has developed a range of strategies to promote engagement, positive behaviour and respectful relationships for all students in our school through a multi-tiered support system, ensuring that each student has the level of support needed to access and fully engage in all areas of the curriculum including communication.

We acknowledge that our students require individual social, emotional and educational support at school, and that the needs of students will change over time as they grow and learn.

A summary of the Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) including Tier 1 universal (whole of school), Tier 2 (targeted groups) and Tier 3 (individual engagement strategies) used by our school is included below:

Universal: tier 1

- *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*
- *ensuring all student have access to a recognised and functional form of communication*
- *School Wide Positive Behaviour Support (SWPBS) whole school behaviour expectations.*
- *all members of the school community know and understand the SWPBS mantra's of 'Act Safely', 'Show Respect' and 'Be your Best'.*
- *positive behaviour and student achievement is acknowledged in the classroom and in all school settings using the SWPBS acknowledgment system. Student achievements are further acknowledged in school assemblies, in the newsletter, on the school website and social media platforms and in communication to families.*
- *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 Strengthened Career Education and 'A job well done' to ensure that students are able to choose subjects and programs that are tailored to their interests, strengths and aspirations*
- *teachers at Bendigo Special Developmental School use a pedagogical instructional framework, taken from the Victorian Teaching and Learning Model 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 Bendigo Special Developmental 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 our school, different stages of their schooling and for those exiting our school.*
- *positive behaviour and student achievement is acknowledged in the classroom, in our Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) and school wide with our SWPBS acknowledgement system.*
- *positive behaviour and student achievement is formally in school assemblies, communication to parents and within the wider community via the newsletter and social media.*
- *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 Leadership Team and the Student Opinion Survey. Students are also encouraged to speak with their teachers, education support staff, specialist teachers, mental health practitioner, Assistant Principal and Principal whenever they have any questions or concerns.*
- *create opportunities for cross—age connections amongst students through school performances, athletics, music programs and peer support programs*
- *All students are welcome to self-refer to the Mental Health Practitioner, Teacher, 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:*
 - *Resilience, Rights and Respectful Relationships*
 - *Safe Schools*
- *SWPBS tier 1 interventions in our school include:*
 - *explicit teaching of SWPBS expected behaviours*
 - *use of tier 1 visuals across the school*
 - *Explicit use, teaching and modelling of the PODD (Pragmatic Organised Dynamic Display) book.*
 - *Use of SWPBS language*
 - *Teaching of the 'Zones of Regulation'*

Targeted: Tier 2

- *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 – refer to our Child Safe Standards Risk Register for further information*
- *Each school group has a Coordinator, a teacher responsible for their cohort, who monitors programs and supports for students in their cohort, and act as a point of contact for students who may need additional support.*

- all students from Year 7 and above will be assisted to develop a Career Action Plan, with targeted goals and support to plan for their future
- 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 support from The Mental Health Practitioner, having an Individual Learning Plan and a Student Support Group (SSG).
- Bendigo Special Developmental School assists students to plan their transition into post school options including transition visits to service providers, further education providers, planning and supporting work experience supported by their Career Action Plan
- Teachers, therapists and 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
- 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
- The Mental Health Practitioner will facilitate group learning with students, identified by wellbeing data, teacher or parent referral, with a focus on health and wellbeing strategies, personal and social capabilities and identified age appropriate topics.

Individual: tier 3

- Students requiring individualised support are identified through wellbeing data and teacher referral. The supports following may include:
 - Positive Behaviour Support Plan
 - Individual Program and supports
 - Safety Plan
 - Increased SSGs and liaising with external supports including therapists.
- Other individualised engagement strategies include:
 - [Student Support Groups](#)
 - [Individual Education Plans](#)
 - [Behaviour Support Plans](#)
 - [Student Support Services](#)
 - Cultural plan
 - Medical Action Plan
 - Health Plan
 - Student Snapshot
 - referral to Mental Health Practitioner and Family Support Teacher
 - referral to ChildFirst, Orange Door, Headspace
 - The Bendigo Special Developmental School Therapy team provides individual reviews and plans to support students to engage in the curriculum.
 - The student wellbeing and engagement team includes a behaviour coach who analyses school behaviour data, identifying students at risk of disengagement and works with staff and families to implement considered evidence-based strategies to increase student's wellbeing, safety and engagement.

Bendigo Special Developmental 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 Positive Behaviour Support Plan*
- *developing a communication passport*
- *ensuring each student has access to appropriate communication supports and has the ability to communicate at school*
- *developing a program based on the students' needs and point of need*
- *considering if any environmental changes need to be made, for example changing the classroom set up.*
- *The Family Support Teacher assists students and families in matters involving outside agencies including DHHS, CASA and NDIS. The Family Support Worker offers support in NDIS and DHHS matters, legal support, Care team management.*
- *referring student and families 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*

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 Education Support Officers*
- *running regular Student Support Group meetings for all students:*
- *having an open and caring school environment that welcomes parents and carers at any time.*

4. Identifying students in need of support

Bendigo Special Developmental 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 to help identify students in need of support and enhance student wellbeing. Bendigo Special Developmental 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 data*
- *academic performance*
- *observations by school staff such as changes in engagement, behaviour, self-care, social connectedness and motivation*
- *engagement with families*

- *self-referrals or referrals from peers*
- *SENTRAL data*
- *Family support worker*
- *Mental Health Practitioner*
- *Teacher Referral*
- *Family (parent/carer) referral*
- *Student Support Group Meetings*
- *Information shared by external agencies*

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
- have access to the curriculum utilising any supports necessary to do so
- 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
- communicate their needs, wants and feelings
- have access to communications supports at all times in all school settings

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, staff and families are grounded in our school's Statement of Values and our SWPBS behaviour expectation matrix. Student bullying behaviour will be responded to consistently with Bendigo Special Developmental School's Bullying policy.

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 Bendigo Special Developmental School Bullying Prevention Policy.

When students at Bendigo Special Developmental School are not displaying behaviours in line with SWPBS: Act Safely, Show Respect or Be your Best, then staff and the school will respond after considering each incident at an individual level.

The school responds, as part of a tiered response to behaviours that do not meet our SWPBS behaviour expectations, 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.

Response to these behaviours may include:

- *Explicit teaching of the SWPBS expected behaviour*
- *Referring students to the SWPBS expected behaviour*
- *Change of individual program*
- *Therapist input*

All incidents of students not following SWPBS behaviour expectations are recorded on the school welfare and reporting system SENTRAL.

For incidents of higher frequency or severity, Bendigo Special Developmental School may engage the following:

- *Analysis of SENTRAL incident reporting data.*
- *Support from Behaviour Coach to write and implement Positive Behaviour support plans.*
- *Developmental of Student Safety Plans, Student Support Plans, Risk Assessments*
- *Student Support Group Meetings*
- *Care Team Meetings*
- *Support of School or NDIS therapists*
- *Collaboration with external agencies*

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 Bendigo Special Developmental 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

Bendigo Special Developmental 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:

- engaging with families via the Seesaw platform

- 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

Bendigo Special Developmental 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

Bendigo Special Developmental 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
- Included in transition and enrolment packs
- 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 Policy
- Bullying Prevention Policy
- Inclusion and Diversity Policy

POLICY REVIEW AND APPROVAL

Policy last reviewed	Aug 2023	
Consultation	Consultative Committee School Council	Date: Date:
Approved by	Principal	
Next scheduled review date	Aug 2026	