Student Engagement and Wellbeing

Rationale:
Sunshine Special Developmental School (SDS) encourages and supports young people to live happy and fulfilling lives by nurturing independence and self-worth. This policy aligns to the undertaking by The Department of Education and Training to provide a safe, secure learning community and high quality learning opportunities for every student in Victorian schools.

The Student Engagement and Wellbeing Policy is the overarching document which provides a framework for all student learning across our school community. Sunshine SDS is committed to providing a safe, secure environment which thrives on high quality learning and engagement opportunities for all students. Students can only reach their full potential when they are happy, healthy, safe and engaged in meaningful learning activities and when there is a positive school culture that is fair and respectful to engage and support their learning. Our school acknowledges that student wellbeing and student learning outcomes are inextricably linked.

School Profile
Located in the Western Suburbs of Melbourne, Sunshine SDS has an enrolment of approximately 160 students with moderate to severe intellectual disabilities. The school has a commitment to inclusive education and therefore we have some primary aged students attending Baserooms at Sunshine Heights Primary School and Ardeer Primary School.

The main campus at Ivory Court is the administrative hub of the school and supports 140 students across all stages of learning. Students move through each section of the school within pathways that reflect their individual needs. The school offers a broad range of specialist programs; these include art, library, dance therapy, performing arts and physical education. Staff work within collaborative teams that include physiotherapists, occupational therapists and speech pathologists who support the identification and implementation of priority learning.

School Vision
Excellence in education for every student, every day, without exception.

School Values
Sunshine Special Developmental School values and is committed to the promotion of:-

- **Collaboration** - We take collective responsibility to reflect on and improve instructional practice for student learning growth
- **Respect** - We demonstrate high standards of professional integrity, trust and commitment
- **Courage** - We challenge ourselves with a spirit of open mindedness, honesty and optimism
- **Persistence** - We hold firm to our purpose, positively approaching hardships and challenges
- **Learning** - We strive for excellence in the achievement of knowledge and skills
Student Engagement and Wellbeing

Student and Staff Expectations

- Be Safe
- Be a friend
- Be a learner

Aims - Guiding Principles

Our school aims to ensure “every student shines” by:

- Creating a child safe and friendly learning environment where students have a right to feel and be safe. The wellbeing of the students in our care will always be our first priority and we have a zero tolerance to child abuse.

- Collaboratively developing and implementing a fair and respectful whole school engagement and behaviour support approach

- Including pro-social values and behaviour within curriculum delivery to enable students to acquire knowledge and skills, value diversity and build a culture of learning, community and engagement

- Providing students with a sense of ownership of their environment, promoting active student participation and voice

- Supporting families to engage in their child’s learning and build their capacity as active learners

- Promoting active student participation to improve student outcomes and engagement

- Monitoring and evaluating the progress of students who require social/emotional and educational support

- Promoting the participation and empowerment of students

- Identifying and responding to individual students who require additional assistance and support
Student Engagement and Wellbeing

- Implementing preventative and early intervention approaches
- Building strong links with the local community to gain access to an extended network of community members, professionals and educators
- Providing evidence based systems and interventions for accountability
- Creating learning communities
- Providing a stimulating and secure learning environment

Student Engagement Definition

To realise our vision, our school has in place a range of strategies to promote engagement, positive behaviour and respectful relationships for all students at our school. We recognise that some students, as a group or as individuals may need extra social, emotional or educational support to flourish at school.

The partnership and communication between home and school is central to student attendance and effective engagement in instruction and learning. Student engagement can be defined by three interrelated components: behavioural, emotional and cognitive.

- **Behavioural engagement** refers to student’s participation in education, including the academic, social and extracurricular activities within the school program

- **Emotional engagement** encompasses student’s emotional reactions while in the classroom and school environment. It defines the student’s sense of belonging or connectedness to the school

- **Cognitive engagement** relates to students’ investment in learning and their intrinsic motivation and self-regulation

Learning and Teaching

Sunshine SDS engages students to succeed in a highly effective learning environment by:

- Building a shared vision as a Learning Community (use of data, collaboration and focus on learning) which reflects consistent expectations implemented within classrooms across the school.

- Using evidence and data, including Abilities Based Learning and Education Support (ABLES) and the Victorian Curriculum to identify priority learning and essential content and monitor student learning growth

- Engaging in rich and collaborative partnerships with parents to develop and monitor Individual Learning Plans for students which outline specific and relevant goals

- Using research based best practice, collaboration and reflective practice in Professional Learning Teams (PLTs) to identify and implement highly effective and consistent instructional practice across each section of the school

- Aligning resources to support the identification and intervention of students needs for educational, social and emotional support
Key Strategies and tools for engagement include:

- **1:1 IPad for staff and students** - promotes whole school modelling of student voice with Proloquo2go

- **Individual Learning Plans (ILP)** - Supported by data and evidence and developed in consultation with parents/caregivers, this identifies priority learning and informs classroom curriculum design

- **Sensory Programs** - Optimise learning readiness, employing specific strategies to assist in regulating behaviour for increased engagement in learning

- **Classroom Environments** - To compliment primary intervention strategies classroom and school environments are structured in a range of ways to accommodate differentiated learning such as classroom break spaces, zones and engine rooms.

- **Visual Supports** - Visual supports are provided within the classroom and in all external learning spaces to ensure students have a voice. Visual supports can range from proloquo2go core words, individual symbol stick symbols, Boardmaker symbols and a range of Alternate augmentative communication systems.

- **Technology** - Compliments the learning styles of many students, enables broader access to the curriculum and promotes increased engagement and motivation

- **Enrichment Programs** - Cater to students personal strengths and interests and currently include: performing arts, art, physical education, dance therapy and library

- **Inclusion** - Students based at local primary schools (within Baserooms) are provided with inclusion opportunities where appropriate within the host school

- **Contexts for learning** - Students across the whole school are offered the opportunity to participate in a wide variety of engaging activities external to their classroom. These are student lead activities which focus on motivation, engagement and connection to real learning in a range of environments.

- **Camp** - Primary Years and Secondary Years students have the opportunity to attend an annual camp at Blackwood

- **Electives** - Secondary Years students access weekly electives across the school where they participate in a variety of programs based on interests and strengths
Behavior Support

Highly effective instructional support underpinned by positive behaviour practices and interventions is the foundation for improving student learning growth.

School Wide Positive Behaviour Support (SWPBS) provides an operational framework for achieving these outcomes.

SWPBS emphasises four integrated elements:

- **Data** for decision making,
- **Measurable outcomes** supported and evaluated by data,
- **Practices** with evidence that these outcomes are achievable,
- **Systems** that efficiently and effectively support implementation of these practices

Positive behaviour support is a crucial aspect of teaching practice resulting in high levels of student engagement.

Social skills development promotes the management of students own behaviour within the school environment and the wider community.

Sunshine SDS aims to develop all students’ self-esteem leading to greater independence.

Programs provide a positive and consistent approach to the management of behaviours which may result in disengagement or interrupt the students’ learning.

Positive behaviour support focuses on a school wide multi-tiered approach:

- **Primary behaviour support**: focus on preventative proactive strategies that encourage engagement and teach skills to manage and regulate behaviour. Every student has an individual support plan which identifies current skill level, potential difficulties and strategies and resources to support successful learning and engagement.

- **Secondary behaviour support**: students who require additional resources to acquire social skills will have an individual behaviour support plan developed in partnership with families.

- **Tertiary behaviour support**: students may require external assistance from outside the school specifically targeting high risk behaviours. The behaviour plan is managed within a group forum including the involvement of external agencies. The behaviour plan will be reviewed to include a functional behaviour analysis and behaviour response plan for escalated high risk behaviours. This plan is reviewed monthly with relevant key people.

Currently this framework includes the Positive Behaviour Support Policy. The framework will be systematically updated to include associated policies and protocols developed in line with this framework.
Student Engagement and Wellbeing

The Positive Behaviour Support Policy outlines the processes in place to support engagement and wellbeing in addressing behaviour support across all school environments.

We have a proactive approach to promoting student wellbeing and engagement through:

- Developing a Student Wellbeing team consisting of:
  - Wellbeing Team Leader and PBS Team Leader
  - School Nurse
  - Chaplain
  - Vietnamese liaison officer
  - Resource funding/parent volunteer program coordinator
  - Network Psychologist

- Forums to discuss, resource and collaborate on all issues relating to engagement and wellbeing
  - Weekly wellbeing meetings - Primary and Secondary Years
  - Weekly wellbeing transport meeting
  - Fortnightly PBS team meeting
  - Weekly leadership meeting
  - Weekly team leader meeting

- A community hub established for school based parent forums and external agencies
- Student Support Group Meetings
- A wide range of parent forums and information sessions conducted throughout the school year
- A holiday program run in conjunction with Interchange Western

Ratified at School Council: 26/07/2016
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