



HELP FOR NON-ENGLISH SPEAKERS

If you need help to understand the information in this policy, please contact Southern Autistic School on 03 9563 8139 or southern.autistic.sch@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.

Southern Autistic 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.

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
7. Engaging with families
8. Evaluation

POLICY

1. School Profile

Southern Autistic School is a specialist school dedicated to the education of children with Autism Spectrum Disorder and with significant deficits in language. Located in Bentleigh East, Southern Autistic services the South-east Victoria Region with students attending from a vast catchment area. Nine DET funded buses support student transport to the school through the Student Transport Unit. 277 school aged students attend Southern Autistic School. To enrol in the school aged program students must meet the Program for Students with a Disability ASD eligibility. 21 students were enrolled in the Early Education Program for 3 to 4 year olds. Our Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy curriculum and education programs include the Early Education Program and extend through to those in senior secondary years up to 18 years of age.

2. School values, philosophy and vision

Southern Autistic School's vision for our students is to develop lifelong learners who have a sense of belonging and are encouraged to implement their skills and knowledge to make choices and accept responsibility for their decisions.

Mission

Southern Autistic School is committed to building relationships that value diversity and are based on collaboration, mutual respect, social equality, co-operation, shared responsibility and self-discipline.

Values

The following values are seen as being central to the life of our school and how all members of the school community should conduct themselves.

I am Safe

I am a learner

I belong

Engagement and wellbeing strategies

Students behave positively when they know; what is expected of them, when they feel safe, and that people care about them and their learning. Great teachers and great teaching make a significant difference to how students behave and learn. Positive behaviour doesn't just happen. Students need to know what is expected of them and what positive behaviour looks like.

Southern Autistic School has developed a range of strategies to promote engagement, positive behaviour and respectful relationships for all students in our school. 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.

SCHOOL WIDE POSITIVE BEHAVIOUR SUPPORT – An evidence based approach to teaching and managing student behaviour. The tiered approach to teaching behaviour explicitly teaches students how to behave appropriately across all aspects of their school day.

INDIVIDUAL REWARD SYSTEM – Personalised to students when required. This system is used to shape behaviour more instantly. Students earn a series of tokens which then enables them ready access to an immediate rewards.

I CAN BE SAFE – our social safety program empowers students by developing knowledge around what are acceptable and unacceptable behaviours around their bodies.

WELBEING AND SPOT TEAM – The team meets with students and teachers to provide all elements of wellbeing support for students. Teachers follow a referral process to initiate support.

TRAUMA – staff working with students who exhibit behaviours as a result of childhood trauma have access to training

3. Wellbeing and engagement strategies

Southern Autistic 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 (year group specific) and individual engagement strategies used by our school is included below:

Universal

- high and consistent expectations of all staff, students and parents and carers
- prioritise positive relationships between staff and students, through our School Wide Positive Behaviour Support Approach to develop positive behaviour
- 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, student management data and school level assessment data
- deliver an individualised and targeted learning program in alignment with the Victoria Curriculum
- Provide individual learning plans in 3 priority areas: Communication, Health and Social Competencies
- teachers at Southern Autistic School use STAR/LINKS 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 Southern Autistic 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 communicated to parents
- monitor student attendance and implement attendance improvement strategies at a whole-school, cohort and individual level
- all students are welcome to self-refer to the Student Wellbeing Coordinator, Year Group Leaders, 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:
 - I Can Be Safe
 - Respectful Relationships
- 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 of harassment.

Targeted

- each sub school has a School Leader responsible for their sub school, who monitor the health and wellbeing of students in their sub school, and act as a point of contact for students who may need additional support
- 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
- 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 Aboriginal Learning, Wellbeing and Safety Action Plan Policy
- our English is 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 including through our inclusion and diversity program and we offer support to our students through the school wellbeing team.
- we support learning and wellbeing outcomes of students from refugee background through supporting the families with our spot team and wellbeing team through our inclusion and diversity program.
- 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 and running inclusion programs for students
- all students in Out of Home Care are supported in accordance with the Department's policy on support 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 Education 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

Individual

Southern Autistic School implements a range of strategies that support and promote individual engagement. These can include:

- Student Support Groups
- Individual Education Plans
- Behaviour - Students
- Behaviour Support Plans

as well as to other Department programs and services such as:

- Program for Students with Disabilities
- Mental health toolkit
- headspace
- Navigator
- LOOKOUT

Southern Autistic 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

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

Southern Autistic 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. Southern Autistic 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
- engagement with families
- Involvement with external child-focused 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 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.

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.

6. Student behavioral expectations and management

Behavioural expectations of students are grounded in our school's Statement of Values/Student code of conduct and outlined below.

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, Example 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 inappropriate behaviour and the disciplinary action taken by teachers and other school staff.

Our school considers, explores and implements 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
- Referral to the year level coordinator
- Restorative practices
- Detentions
- Behaviour support and intervention meetings
- Suspension
- expulsion

	Always	When we are out and about	When we are private	When we are working	When we are playing	When we are moving
I am a learner	Listen to the staff and follow instructions	Follow the expected routine in the community Have a go	I close the door I flush the toilet and leave it clean I wash my hand with soap and water	Follow classroom schedule Make choices about learning Ask for help	Initiate interactions/play Use the communication visual in the yard	Building independence in transitioning
I am safe	STOP WALK TALK Make good choices	Stay with the group “Walk with me” Road Safety awareness So Safe Program	I close the door I wash my hands with soap and water	Hands down Use and share resources appropriately Ask before leaving the room Use own password and log in for computers	Hands down Use equipment safely Wearing appropriate clothing Play safe games	Hands down “Walk with me”
I belong	Wear School Uniform	We help each other We stay together as a group We use quiet voices	I knock before entering the toilet I leave the toilet clean I am in and out promptly and return to the class quickly	Use kind words Keep classroom tidy Take turns	We include others in	Stay with your group We leave space ready for the next group Quiet voices

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

- [Suspension process](#)
- [Expulsions - Decision](#)
- <https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/restraint-seclusion/policy>

The Principal of Southern Autistic 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

Southern Autistic 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
- inviting families to celebration events such as end of term parties, fun days and whole school assemblies

- including families in Student Support Groups, and developing individual plans for students.

8. Evaluation

Southern Autistic 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

Southern Autistic 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

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

- [Suspension process](#)
- [Expulsions - Decision](#)
- <https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/restraint-seclusion/policy>

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	November 2023
Consultation	School Community February 2024
Approved by	Principal – Scott Tucker
Next scheduled review date	Before November 2025