

# STUDENT WELLBEING AND ENGAGEMENT POLICY



## Help for non-English speakers

If you need help to understand the information in this policy please contact the school office (02) 6059 8987.

## 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.

Belvoir Special 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.

## SCOPE

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

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## POLICY

### 1. School profile

Belvoir Special Developmental School is a multi-mode specialist school in Wodonga which provides a quality educational program for students aged five to eighteen years with an intellectual disability.

The school is organised as four pods. Yellow pod junior primary; Green pod senior primary; Purple pod junior secondary with 2 classes at Wodonga Middle Years (one at each campus); and Orange pod senior secondary. Classrooms groupings are based on a variety of criteria, with a view towards helping students achieve short term goals as stepping stones towards a long-term post school outcome. Class sizes vary from 8 students to 12 students and are staffed according to the student need in each classroom.

In accordance with the school's documented enrolment policy and state-wide eligibility criteria, students will be enrolled at Belvoir Special School after consultation with parents, previous schools or kindergartens and appropriate paramedic personnel if needed. The school caters for students living in Wodonga and surrounding area in Northeast Victoria as well as Albury and Southern NSW.

Belvoir is committed to develop lifelong learners who are encouraged to pursue their individual strengths and talents. Our aim is to enable all students who graduate from Belvoir to live an optimal life which allows them to achieve all their dreams and be as independent as possible.

Through our current Strategic Plan we strive to:

- Build and embed the school vision and values by having consistent expectations and a collaborative staff ethos,
- Use proactive rather than reactive strategies to improve the current educational achievements of all students and we will value and acknowledge the efforts of students and staff.
- Strive to maximise students learning outcomes to give each student the best educational experience, within the framework of the Victorian Curriculum, whilst focusing on fundamental literacy, communication, numeracy and life skills.
- Empower Student Voice through positive participation and capable contributions to create ownership of student learning and opportunities beyond the school boundary.

The Goals of our Strategic Plan are:

- Improve engagement and learning outcomes for all students.
- Improve student voice, agency and leadership to enhance student engagement.
- Maximise the resilience and emotional capacity of all students.

## 2. School values, philosophy and vision

At Belvoir, we pride ourselves as a school that promotes community recognition and acceptance of the equality of gender, the equality of all races, regardless of their religious or political convictions, their abilities, their age, or specific learning requirements. While we believe in equality for all, we also emphasise the value of difference.

**The school's philosophy is reflected in its motto, 'Together We Can'.**

This is based on the belief that children learn best in a safe, co-operative environment that challenges and supports them to achieve their goals.

**The school vision is 'Together we create safe and inclusive learning environments where all students experience success'.**

We value strong, positive relationships throughout the entire school community that exist in a culture where care, commitment, courtesy and co-operation are paramount. We support individual achievement based on a student's strengths, supporting individual goals to enable students to be as independent as possible. All students have an individual learning plan established in consultation with parents and relevant professionals.

Belvoir is a School Wide Positive Behaviour Support School.

## 3. Engagement strategies

Belvoir Special 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.

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, 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, student management data and school level assessment data
- deliver a broad curriculum including the Victorian Pathways Certificate to ensure that students can participate in programs that are tailored to their interests, strengths and aspirations.
- teachers at Belvoir Special School use a consistent 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 Belvoir Special 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 can contribute to and provide feedback on decisions about school operations through the Student Representative Council and other forums including year group meetings and Peer Support Groups.
- all students are encouraged to speak with their teachers, the Student Wellbeing and Engagement Leading Teacher, Assistant Principal and Principal whenever they have any questions or concerns. 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:
  - Zones of Regulation
  - Respectful Relationships
  - e-Safe Schools
- programs, incursions and excursions developed to address issue specific behaviour (i.e. anger management programs)
- opportunities for student inclusion (i.e. sports teams, clubs, recess and lunchtime activities)

### Targeted

- a leading teacher whose role it is to monitor the wellbeing and engagement, including attendance of students at the school and act as a point of contact for students who may need additional support will liaise with staff and students around these issues.
- Koorie students are supported to engage fully with their education, in a positive learning environment that understands and appreciates the strengths of First Nations People and Culture. All our Koorie students are supported by our Koorie Education Support Officer (KESO)
- we support learning and wellbeing outcomes of students from refugee background
- 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) for an Educational Needs Assessment, and liaison to communicate with external services.
- our English as an additional language students are supported in a cultural and linguistically appropriate manner to ensure student 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](#).

- 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
- Students in Orange Pod will be assisted to develop a Career Action Plan, with targeted goals and support to plan for their future, this may include work experience.
- 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

Belvoir Special 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 students and their parent/carer to talk about how best to help the student engage with school
- developing a Behaviour Support, De-escalation or Safety Plan, as required
- 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 Plan in collaboration with the student and their family
- participate in regular Care Team meetings for all students:
  - in Out of Home Care
  - and with other complex needs that require ongoing support and monitoring.

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

- referral to Student Engagement and Wellbeing Leader and Student Support Services
- referral to ChildFirst, NECAMHS and other external services as deemed appropriate
- [Mental health toolkit](#)

- [headspace](#)
- [Navigator](#)
- [LOOKOUT](#)

#### 4. Identifying students in need of support

Belvoir Special 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. Example 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
- The Engagement and Wellbeing Team meet weekly to identify, plan, implement and monitor support required for individuals.
- Wellbeing referrals and follow-up actions are documented using our school data collection system.

#### 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, 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.

## 6. Student behavioural expectations and management

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

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. Student bullying behaviour will be responded to consistently with Belvoir Special School's Bullying Prevention policy.

When a student acts in breach of the behaviour standards of our school community, Belvoir Special 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 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 the classroom or other reasonable and proportionate responses to misbehaviour
- withdrawal of privileges
- restorative practices
- 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 and Training.

The Principal of Belvoir Special School is responsible for ensuring all suspensions and expulsions are recorded on CASES21.

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

## 7. Engaging with families

Belvoir Special 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

Belvoir Special 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

Belvoir Special 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 in the following ways

- Included in staff induction processes
- Included in 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 policies are relevant to this student wellbeing and engagement 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](#)

## POLICY REVIEW AND APPROVAL

Policy last reviewed	June 2024
Consultation	June/ July consultation with staff and parents before endorsed by school council in July 2024
Approved by	Principal
Next scheduled review date	June 2026 (this is a 2 year review cycle)