

Dimboola Memorial Secondary College

**Student Engagement
&
Well-Being Policy**



**Produced in consultation
with the school community**

**To be read in conjunction with
*Effective Schools are Engaging Schools –
Student Engagement Policy Guidelines***

October, 2009

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1 School profile statement

The fundamental purpose of Dimboola Memorial Secondary College is to enable every student to reach his or her full academic, social and physical potential in an environment where they develop independence, self-discipline, a sense of achievement, high self-esteem and respect for others.

Values

Dimboola Memorial Secondary College believes that:

- Every student has the capacity to learn.
- Every student should have an opportunity to experience success.
- Every student and staff member has the right to learn and work in a safe, caring environment where individual differences are respected.
- Every student should have an opportunity to express their opinions and an opportunity to make a positive contribution to the school.
- All staff members should have an opportunity to develop professionally.
- All staff members should have access to consultative processes as part of the decision making processes at the school.
- The school has a valuable role to play as part of the community.

Context

Dimboola Memorial Secondary College (DMSC) is a relatively small rural college with a fairly stable enrolment around 200 students. Our feeder schools include Dimboola Primary School, Jeparit Primary School and St Peters Lutheran Primary School (Dimboola). The school has strong community links and regularly participates in community projects as well as making its facilities available to the community. Employment opportunities in our area are predominantly linked to either the farming or railway industries.

The College was opened in 1924 (as Dimboola Memorial Higher Elementary School) as a living memorial to the soldiers of the 1914-18 war and continues to be the community's war memorial, with many features of historical and sentimental value, particularly the Matron Paeschke Memorial.

The College provides a quality program from Years 7 to 12. Whilst the needs of all students are paramount, special programs exist for those students with disabilities or literacy and numeracy issues. Integration aides support students with disabilities and negotiated programs designed to meet their specific needs are developed. Students not studying German in Years 7 to 9 do English Literacy Skills, and approximately half the Year 7 and 8 students are involved in the QuickSmart numeracy withdrawal program.

In support of an extensive curriculum the College provides a wide range of facilities, including up to date computer facilities, a sports stadium and extensive outdoor sporting facilities, clay target trap, music room, visual art rooms and equipment, a technology centre covering automotive, metal, wood, textiles and food, an assembly hall, well resourced library (including a regional German language centre), video conferencing facilities, plus two school buses and car. The College is working closely with Dimboola Primary School to develop a co-location proposal for new facilities through the Building Futures Program.

The formal curriculum covers each of the key learning areas at each year level (7-10). The school offers a wide range of VCE studies as well as VET and VCAL in the senior years. Year 10 students can access VCE and VET units. We currently have 24 teaching and around 20 non-teaching staff to implement these programs. An active College concert band compliments a withdrawal program for instrumental music instruction. The College has a sister school relationship with the Bruder-

Grimm Schule in Neu-Isenburg (Germany) underpinning a strong student four-week exchange program. A well-developed sports program also exists and is based around a House program for swimming, athletics and cross-country.

We have 4 buses bringing students from Pimpinio, Gerang Gerung, Katyil-Wallup and Jeparit. The College also runs a minibus from Horsham. Numbers are equally distributed across year levels, resulting in class sizes of approximately 16-18 in years 7 to 10. The relatively small number of students at the College enables close monitoring of student performance in all aspects of school life, and attention to students' individual needs within a supportive student welfare and management structure involving level coordinators, a school nurse, College Chaplain and regional student services personnel. Student leadership is important at DMSC and we have an active SRC with delegates attending School Council Meetings.

2 Whole-school prevention statement

This school aims to improve student wellbeing with a focus on increasing safety and behaviour. The goals are:

1. To improve or maintain the school's mean score on the Attitudes to School Survey each year with the aim of achieving the levels indicated below by 2012
 - Connectedness to Peers 4.20
 - Student Safety 4.20
2. To reduce the proportion of students missing >20 days of school per year from the 2008 level.

The strategies to do this are to strengthen student well being and engagement by:

- Evaluating existing programs and structures, and developing different models to enhance engagement, relationships and wellbeing
- Continuing professional development for staff and community on Restorative Practice, Mind Matters and poverty framework.
- Investigating alternative organisational structures to increase student engagement
- Increasing the use and understanding of 'Students at risk mapping tool'.

Improve student monitoring, tracking and pathway planning processes by:

- Implementing a revised structure for supporting student transition in the College
- Investigating Personalising Education and delivery of Individual Learning Plans for every student.

To enhance this, the school will use the following resources:

- School nurse
- School chaplain
- Building program – S&LC, Co location with DPS, Hall renovations, sports stadium renovations
- Level Coordinators and Form Teachers
- School Support Services

3 Rights and responsibilities

3.1 Guiding principles

Every member of the school community has a right to fully participate in an educational environment that is safe, supportive and inclusive. Everyone deserves to be treated with respect and dignity.

3.2 Equal Opportunity

The *Equal Opportunity Act 1995* sets out the types or grounds of discrimination that are unlawful and aims to promote community recognition and acceptance of the equality of men and women, and the equality of people of all races, regardless of their religious or political convictions, their impairments or their age.

Under the act it is unlawful to discriminate against a person on the basis of the following attributes:

- age
- breastfeeding
- gender identity
- impairment
- industrial activity
- lawful sexual activity
- marital status
- parental status or status as carer
- physical features
- political belief or activity
- pregnancy
- race
- religious belief or activity
- sex
- sexual orientation
- personal association (with a person who is identified by reference to any of the above attributes).

3.3 The Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006

The Charter sets out a list of 20 rights that reflect the following four basic principles:

- Freedom
- Respect
- Equality
- Dignity

The charter outlines a vision of human rights for all Victorians. The charter affirms that all people are born free and equal in dignity and rights. While the charter demands equality for all, it also emphasises the value of difference. The charter requires public authorities, including government schools and their employees, to act compatibly with human rights and to consider human rights when making decisions and delivering services.

- The right not to be discriminated against
- The right to privacy and reputation
- The right to freedom of thought, conscience, religion and belief
- Cultural Rights

It is important to understand that with human rights comes a responsibility to respect other human rights.

All DEECD employees must act compatibly with the Charter and give proper consideration to human rights when making decisions. Everyone should:

- Encourage compliance with the Charter
- Support others to act compatibly with the Charter, and
- Respect and promote human rights

Part of the monitoring of Human Rights will be to complete the Charter Compliance Checklist on the School Compliance web site.

3.4 Students with disabilities

The Disability Standards for Education 2005 clarify and make more explicit the obligations on schools and the rights of students under the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992*. The standards cover enrolment, participation, curriculum development, student support services, and harassment and victimisation.

An education provider must make 'reasonable adjustments' to accommodate a student with disability. An adjustment is a measure or action taken to assist a student with disability to participate in education and training on the same basis as other students. An adjustment is reasonable if it does this while taking into account the student's learning needs and balancing the interests of all parties affected, including those of the student with the disability, the education provider, staff and other students.

In determining whether an adjustment is reasonable, an education provider should take into account information about:

- the nature of the student's disability
- his or her preferred adjustment
- any adjustments that have been provided previously
- any recommended or alternative adjustments.

This information might come from the student, an associate of the student, independent experts, or a combination of these people.

An education provider should ensure that the student, or an associate of the student, has timely information about the processes for determining whether the proposed adjustment would cause unjustifiable hardship to the provider. The provider should also ensure that these processes maintain the dignity, respect, privacy and confidentiality of the student and the associates of the student, consistent with the rights of the rest of the community.

The provider may consider all likely costs and benefits, both direct and indirect, for the provider, the student and any associates of the student, and any other persons in the learning or wider community, including:

- costs associated with additional staffing, providing special resources or modifying the curriculum
- costs resulting from the student's participation in the learning environment, including any adverse impact on learning and social outcomes for the student, other students and teachers
- benefits of the student's participation in the learning environment, including positive learning and social outcomes for the student, other students and teachers, and
- any financial incentives, such as subsidies or grants, available to the provider if the student participates.

The DDA and the Education Standards do not require changes to be made if this would impose unjustifiable hardship to a person or organisation.

3.5 Bullying and harassment

Definitions

Harassment is any verbal, physical or sexual conduct (including gestures) which is uninvited, unwelcome or offensive to a person.

Bullying is repeated oppression, physical or psychological, of a less powerful person by a more powerful person or group.

Cyberbullying is a form of bullying which is carried out through an internet service such as email, chat room, discussion group, online social networking, instant messaging or web pages. It can also include bullying through mobile phone technologies such as SMS. It may involve text or images (photos, drawings)

Examples of cyberbullying behaviour are:

- teasing and being made fun of
- spreading of rumours online
- sending unwanted messages
- defamation.

Cyberbullying can happen to anyone and the bully can act anonymously if they want. People can also be bullied online by groups of people such as class groups or collective members of an online community.

It is important for the school to provide a safe and friendly environment for students and staff and to encourage care, courtesy and respect for others. All persons have a legal right to protection from harassment under the Commonwealth Sex Discrimination Act and the Victorian Equal Opportunity Act.

The effects of harassment or bullying include

- poor health – anxiety, depression
- lower self esteem
- reduced study performance
- missed classes, social withdrawal
- reduced career prospects

If a student sees another person being harassed or bullied they should tell the person that you witnessed the incident and advise them to report it to an appropriate person. However, if your friend is harassing another person, let them know that their behaviour is unacceptable.

Bystanders who do nothing to stop bullying may be contributing to the problem by providing an audience for the bully

Harassment is usually directed at a person because of their gender, race, creed or abilities. It can be subtle or explicit.

Subtle: (The most common)

They include:

- Offensive staring and leering.
- Unwanted comments about physical appearance and sexual preference.
- Racist or smutty comments or jokes.
- Questions about another's sexual activity.
- Persistent comments about a person's private life or family.
- Physical contact e.g. purposely brushing up against another's body.
- Offensive name calling.

Explicit: (obvious)

They include:

- Grabbing, aggressive hitting, pinching and shoving etc.
- Unwelcome patting, touching, embracing.
- Repeated requests for dates, especially after refusal.
- Offensive gestures, jokes, comments, letters, phone calls or e-mail.
- Sexually and/or racially provocative remarks.
- Displays of sexually graphic material– pornography.
- Requests for sexual favours.

Extreme forms of sexual harassment will lead to criminal prosecution.

Bullying can involve such things as

- grabbing, aggressive staring, hitting, pinching kicking, pushing and shoving.
- publicly excluding a person from your group
- taking or breaking a person's property
- knocking a person's books or belongings out of their hands or off their desk
- teasing a person because of their looks

Cyberbullying

Being involved in online spaces – either at home or at school - requires students to behave responsibly. This includes:

- the language you use and the things you say
- how you treat others
- respecting people's property (eg copyright)
- visiting appropriate places.

Behaving safely online means:

- protecting your own privacy and personal information (we used to call it 'stranger danger')
- selecting appropriate spaces to work and contribute
- protecting the privacy of others (this can be sharing personal information or images)
- being proactive in letting someone know if there is something is 'not quite right'.
At home this would be a parent or carer, at school a teacher.

If you are being harassed or bullied you should:

- Tell the person you don't like what they are doing and you want them to stop.
- Discuss the matter with a student leader or a teacher/coordinator that you feel comfortable with.

Your concerns will be taken seriously. All complaints will be treated confidentially.

Rights and Responsibilities of Students

Rights	Responsibilities
<p>Students have a right to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • work in a secure environment where, without intimidation, bullying (including cyber-bullying) or harassment they are able to fully develop their talents, interests and ambition • participate fully in the school's educational program 	<p>Students have a responsibility to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • participate fully in the school's educational program and to attend regularly. Students should also be expected to display positive behaviours that demonstrate respect for themselves, their peers, their teachers and all other members of the school community. • Demonstrate respect for the rights of others, including the right to learn, will contribute to an engaging educational experience for themselves and other students. • As students progress through school they will be encouraged and supported to take greater responsibility for their own learning and participation as members of the whole school community. This involves developing as individual learners who increasingly manage their own learning and growth by setting goals and managing resources to achieve these goals. • Students should, with support, be expected to participate fully in the school's educational program and to attend regularly. Students should also display positive behaviours that demonstrate respect for themselves, their peers, their teachers and all other members of the school community.

Rights and Responsibilities of Parents/carers

Rights	Responsibilities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • parents/carers have a right to expect that their children will be educated in a secure environment in which care, courtesy and respect for the rights of others are encouraged 	<p>Parents/carers have a responsibility to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • promote positive educational outcomes for their children by taking an active interest in their child's educational progress and by modeling positive behaviours. • Ensure their child's regular attendance

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage in regular and constructive communication with school staff regarding their child's learning. • support the school in maintaining a safe and respectful learning environment for all students.
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Rights and Responsibilities of Teachers

Rights	Responsibilities
<p>Teachers have a right to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • expect that they will be able to teach in an orderly and cooperative environment • be informed, within Privacy requirements, about matters relating to students that will affect the teaching and learning program for that student 	<p>Teachers have a responsibility to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • fairly, reasonably and consistently, implement the engagement policy. • Know how students learn and how to teach them effectively. • Know the content they teach. • Know their students. • Plan and assess for effective learning. • Create and maintain safe and challenging learning environments. • use a range of teaching strategies and resources to engage students in effective learning.

4. Shared expectations

Schools – principals, teachers and school staff

Schools have a responsibility to provide an educational environment that ensures that all students are valued and cared for, feel they are part of the school, and can engage effectively in their learning and experience success.

The school's values are based on the Australian Government's nine values, for Australian schools, which are:

- **Care and Compassion**
Care for self and others
- **Integrity**
Act in accordance with principles of moral and ethical conduct, ensure consistency between words and deeds
- **Doing Your Best**
Seek to accomplish something worthy and admirable, try hard, pursue excellence
- **Respect** Treat others with consideration and regard, respect another person's point of view

- **Fair Go**
Pursue and protect the common good where all people are treated fairly for a just society
- **Responsibility**
Be accountable for one's own actions, resolve differences in constructive, non-violent and peaceful ways, contribute to society and to civic life, take care of the environment
- **Freedom**
Enjoy all the rights and privileges of Australian citizenship free from unnecessary interference or control, and stand up for the rights of others
- **Understanding, Tolerance and Inclusion**
Be aware of others and their cultures, accept diversity within a democratic society, being included and including others
- **Honesty and Trustworthiness**
Be honest, sincere and seek the truth

School expectations include:

Expectations of students:

- positive participation
- ask for help/ask questions
- enjoy being in class
- treat classmates/teachers with respect and dignity
- value school resources
- regular attendance
- support classmates/teachers

Expectations of teachers:

- create an engaging lesson
- provide enjoyable classrooms
- make sure every student has an equal opportunity to participate
- ask for student input into the curriculum and class environment
- listen to students and value their contribution
- listen to parents insights into their children's learning
- provide a wide range of resources to engage students
- understand the needs of students and accommodate those needs

Expectations of principals:

- provide leadership, not only to school staff but to students as well
- ensure staff, students and the wider school community understand their expectations
- staff and students have the resources and equipment to assist them in the process of teaching and learning
- the curriculum of the school takes into account the needs of specific the students where practicable (such as students with disabilities)
- encourages the participation of parents

Expectations of student wellbeing and support staff:

- support at any time of the school day
- accessibility and availability
- non-judgemental attitudes
- trust and confidentiality
- understanding and caring

Expectations of parents/carers:

- support for their children attending the school
- cooperation with requests from the school
- promotion of positive educational outcomes for their children
- ensure their children are attending school
- communicate clearly with the school about the needs of their children

Restorative Practices

The school is committed to the use of restorative practices with students. Restorative Practices:

- are underpinned by student learning and facilitate an environment of safety, trust and connectedness (Bond et al. 2001, Fuller 1999)
- promote awareness of others, responsibility and empathy (Hopkins 2002)
- involve direct and voluntary participation of those affected by misconduct in its resolution (Braithwaite 2001b)
- promote relationship management rather than behaviour management (Cameron & Thorsborne 2001)
- separate the deed from the doer (Marshall et al. 2002)
- are systematic, not situational (Armstrong 2004)
- are concerned with establishing or re-establishing social equality in relationships; that is, relationships in which each person's rights to equal dignity, concern and respect are satisfied (Morrison 2002).

Diversity in the school community

The school aims to address diversity by:

- maintaining a highly skilled, motivated and energetic workforce who are better able to meet the needs of a diverse school community
- attracting highly skilled and diverse staff making the school a preferred employer
- increasing the range of knowledge, skills and experiences available in the workforce
- enhancing the capacity for effective decision-making due to the greater diversity of perspectives and inputs
- creating more effective work teams due to increased participation levels and an increased capacity to solve problems.

5. School actions and consequences

Student engagement, regular attendance and positive behaviours will be supported through relationship based whole-school and classroom practices, including:

- establishing predictable, fair and democratic classrooms and school environments
- ensuring student participation in the development of classroom and wholeschool expectations

- providing personalised learning programs where appropriate for individual students
- consistently acknowledging all students
- empowering students by creating multiple opportunities for them to take responsibility and be involved in decision-making
- providing physical environments conducive to positive behaviours and effective engagement in learning

Inappropriate behaviours, including irregular attendance, will be responded to through a staged response, including:

- understanding the student's background and needs
- ensuring a clear understanding of expectations by both students and teachers
- providing consistent school and classroom environments
- scaffolding the student's learning program.

Broader support strategies will include:

- involving and supporting the parents/carers,
- involving the student wellbeing coordinator, managed individual pathways or careers coordinators
- tutoring/peer tutoring
- mentoring and/or counselling
- convening student support group meetings – the student support group is an important component of the staged response for students facing difficulty with engagement, attendance or behaviour
- developing individualised flexible learning, behaviour or attendance plans
- providing broader educational programs, for example experiential learning, work education, camps/outdoor education/creative arts
- involving community support agencies.

DMSC SCHOOL-WIDE CONTEXT

1. A **warning** may be given (written or verbal).
2. **Detention** may be given (formal or informal).
3. Students may be referred to the **Year Level Coordinator** who may impose an appropriate consequence
4. Students may be referred to the **Deputy Principal** or **Principal** (this should be the last step) in cases of **severe** or **repeated misbehaviour**.

DMSC CLASS ROOM RULES

Each class will establish up to 6 rules of behaviour. These will be in addition to the school wide rules. Two rules will be common to all classes:

1. No student may interfere with the learning of others.
2. Students must come to class punctually and properly equipped (including home & classroom Work Requirements completed on time).

There will be up to four further negotiated rules for each class which will be overseen by the Year Level Coordinators.

CONSEQUENCES OF INAPPROPRIATE BEHAVIOUR IN CLASS

There is a hierarchy of consequences and a sequence of steps to follow in order that inappropriate behaviour is managed by classroom teachers and support is provided to them in cases where students do not respond as required.

Warning

This should involve a clear communication to students that their behaviour is inappropriate in that it is not in accord with agreed classroom behaviour.

Isolation within the classroom

This need not be complete separation from all other students, but involves moving either the misbehaving student or other students so that the offender is in some way apart from others and under closer supervision. While the student's inappropriate behaviour is rejected, this step should not involve exclusion of the student from class activities.

Teacher controlled consequence.

The teacher will impose an appropriate and reasonable consequence with the aim of reinforcing the type of behaviour that is appropriate.

Detention

Detention should be given if the student has failed to respond to the actions of the teacher and should be recorded in the student's diary. Detention brings the student's behaviour to the attention of the Level Coordinator who may initiate other strategies to manage the student. Detention also exposes the student to the potential consequence of suspension.

Suspension

Year Level Coordinators will maintain a record of unsatisfactory behaviour and apply a points system where three points are allocated for misbehaviour in class and two or one for other types of misbehaviour. At the accumulation of fifteen points parents will be contacted informing them of the situation and the possibility of suspension. If a student accumulates 20 points, provided that at least half are related to misbehaviour in the classroom, a suspension of two days will be imposed.

If a student has been suspended once during the school year the consequences of continuing to behave unacceptably will increase through the doubling of points allocated to each type of misbehaviour and increasing by a day the length of each subsequent suspension.

At the start of each semester students will be able to make a fresh start by having the demerit points set to 0. However, if a student has previously been suspended the doubling of the points and increase in the length of suspension will continue to apply.

Opportunities for redemption of demerit points may be arranged with individual students by the Level Coordinator as a means of rewarding students for changing their behaviour.

Referral to Level Coordinators or Assistant Principal

At any stage a teacher may refer a behaviour problem to the level coordinator or Assistant Principal who may initiate further action at their discretion. While it is within the role of these people to provide support for teachers in matters of discipline, it is acknowledged that it is the classroom teacher who has the primary responsibility for the management of student behaviour in the classroom.

Removal from class

When a student has displayed a consistent pattern of disruptive and uncooperative behaviour they may be removed from the class to a predetermined area. This will be arranged through the level coordinator who will determine the length of the withdrawal, the placement of the student and the program to be followed. The student's parents will be informed of this action.

Severe misbehaviour

Where the misbehaviour is such that it needs to be dealt with immediately and cannot be suitably dealt with in the classroom the student should be sent directly to

the Assistant Principal or Principal. The teacher should take steps to ensure that this action and the nature of the offence are communicated immediately to the office. Such behaviour includes violence, abusive language to the teacher and refusal to follow clear and reasonable instructions. The Assistant Principal or Principal shall determine a suitable punishment, after appropriate investigation and consultation, which may include suspension from school.

Discipline procedures – suspension and expulsion

When considering suspension or expulsion, schools are required to follow the procedures listed in section 4.3 of the DEECD guidelines published in **Effective Schools are Engaging Schools Student Engagement Policy Guidelines** .

Appendices 12 to 18 of the guidelines provide flowcharts and proformas for use in suspension and expulsion procedures.

A student may only be excluded from school in situations where all other measures have been implemented without success or where an immediate suspension is the only appropriate course of action in response to the student's behaviour.

Consequences which may be used prior to suspension include:

- Withdrawal of privileges
- Withdrawal from class if a student's behaviour significantly interferes with the rights of other students to learn or the capacity of a teacher to teach a class, that student may be temporarily isolated from regular classroom activities or, in more severe cases, required to leave the classroom for a specified period of time.

Where appropriate, parents/carers should be informed of such withdrawals.

- Detention - teachers may require a student to finish school work that has not been completed in the regular classroom or to undertake additional or new work or duties at a reasonable time and place. No more than half the time allocated for any recess may be used for this work.
- Where students are required to undertake school work after school, the time should not exceed forty-five minutes.
- The principal should ensure that parents/carers are informed at least the day before the detention. Where family circumstances are such that the completion of after-school work would create undue hardship (for example, where students regularly supervise younger siblings in the absence of parents/carers), the school may choose to negotiate alternative disciplinary measures with parents/carers.

Convening of a support group (See Effective Schools are Engaging Schools - Student Engagement Policy Guidelines for process required).

References

Effective Schools are Engaging Schools - Student Engagement Policy Guidelines	http://www.education.vic.gov.au/healthwellbeing/wellbeing/codeofconduct.htm
School Accountability and Improvement Framework	http://www.education.vic.gov.au/management/schoolimprovement/accountability/default.htm
Effective Schools are Engaging Schools	http://www.eduweb.vic.gov.au/edulibrary/public/stuman/wellbeing/segpolicy.pdf
Disability Standards for Education	http://www.education.vic.gov.au/healthwellbeing/wellbeing/disability/handbook/legislation.htm
Safe Schools	http://www.education.vic.gov.au/healthwellbeing/safety/bullying/default.htm http://www.education.vic.gov.au/healthwellbeing/safety/bullying/cyber/default.htm http://www.education.vic.gov.au/management/elearningsupportservices/www/default.htm
Charter of Human Rights	http://www.education.vic.gov.au/studentlearning/programs/multicultural/tchrcharter.htm http://www.austlii.edu.au/au/legis/vic/consol_act/cohrara2006433/
Equal Opportunity Act	http://www.det.vic.gov.au/hrweb/divequity/eo/eoact.htm
Education and Training Reform Act 2006	http://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/directions/reviewleg.htm
VIT Teacher Code of Conduct	http://www.vit.vic.edu.au/files/documents/1543_Code-of-Conduct-June-2008.pdf