Student Engagement & Well-Being Policy

DARNUM PRIMARY SCHOOL

6 Graham Street
DARNUM VIC 3822

Telephone: (03) 5627 8273
Fax: (03) 5627 8355
Email: darnum.ps@edumail.vic.gov.au
Principal: *Christopher Eeles*

March 2011

Table of contents

1. School Profile Statement

At Darnum Primary School, positive student engagement and well-being continues to be a high priority. Parents and teachers recognise that this element in a student's academic, personal and social curriculum is essential for continual improvement and development. Darnum Primary School aims to develop aspirant students who find purpose and value in their education. Our curriculum is structured to provide optimum learning experiences and opportunities, to ensure that students feel valued and cared for through our behaviour management systems

Our School Strategic Plan outlines our purpose to further develop:

- Student ability to be adaptable and to lean in a variety of styles and modalities
- A responsible attitude to learning within the school community and a sense of belong in to that community
- The knowledge and skills necessary to become successful members of the community with a positive attitude towards education
- Student belief in the value of education and it capacity to positively impact on their life

Furthermore, as a school community we value

- The social skills of respect, tolerance, responsibility, compassion, social consciousness, honesty, pride and success

We are proud to have developed a culture of not only promoting, providing and maintaining personal wellbeing in students and teachers but also of continually reviewing and evaluating our progress in this area and consequently striving to develop curriculum and programs that support student engagement and wellbeing. We do this in the following ways...

1. By creating and maintaining a positive culture of learning in our daily practices and providing an engaging and innovative curriculum that is appropriate to the developmental stages of children
2. Providing a safe and secure learning environment where students are treated fairly and expectations are clear and reasonable.
3. Providing a stimulating curriculum with a variety of intra-school and inter-school activities that include specialist programs such as the Arts, Information and Communications Technology; Physical Education; camps and excursions; Japanese LOTE; various sporting opportunities; a whole school musicals; intervention programs such as Reading Recovery and Bridges Program; transition programs with the local kindergarten and secondary colleges; an instrumental program and various community linked programs and activities
4. Opportunities for students to develop and experience leadership roles in both formal and informal settings

In summary, the learning community of Darnum Primary School views the development of each child in our school as a shared responsibility of teachers, staff, parents and the wider community. We strive to make the formal learning years to be positive, purposeful and challenging in order to develop aspirant and responsible future citizens. We take accept the responsibility of this in a serious manner and view

every child at our school as an individual with specific needs, talents and potential to become the best that they can be.

2. Whole-school Engagement statement

Every student at Darnum Primary School has the right to learn in optimum conditions, to feel safe, secure and engaged in their learning environment and to feel connected to their peers, teachers and wider community. We provide learning opportunities in a fun, supportive and relevant learning environment that both engages and challenges students. We encourage our students to develop the specific skills of Organisation, Resilience, Persistence, Getting Along and Confidence through classroom activities and specific programs such as "Friends for Life"

We believe that it is our responsibility to prepare students both academically and socially for living in a complex and rapidly changing world. Our immediate goals are to increase student connectedness and to demonstrate improved student outcomes in our formal testing and assessments. Our school is committed to providing a safe, happy and engaging curriculum program and we be provide multiple opportunities to raise awareness of the friendly, caring and safe culture within our school.

Creating a positive and engaging school culture forms the strong basis on which we believe optimal student learning will occur. In our aim to develop lifelong learners who value education, we currently address the elements of student engagement.

1. Behavioural Engagement – participation in education: including academic, social and extra-curricular activities.
2. Emotional Engagement – reacting emotionally within the school and the classroom and how connected the students are to the school.
3. Cognitive Engagement – being intrinsically motivated to learn

What is currently happening at our school with regard to these elements

Behavioural Engagement	Emotional Engagement	Cognitive Engagement
How do we actively teach and promote positive social behaviour?	*What do we do to promote connectedness to the school and peers? How do we educate our students about emotional intelligence?*	*How do we actively engage students in their learning and work to motivate/stimulate their thinking?*
• School vision statement that promotes the values of respect, tolerance, compassion, responsibility, social consciousness, honesty, pride and	• Provision of varied programs such as Buddy and transition programs; student leadership roles • Various teaching strategies that encourage higher order thinking, self	• Annual Citizenship Awards to encourage goal setting and striving to achieve • Higher order thinking strategies in the curriculum including the Six Thinking Hats and

- success which is embedded in all programs
- Inquiry based learning to ensure students experience success and develop positive self esteem
- A curriculum that is based and focused on the developmental stages of growth and personal development.
- Buddy programs for Prep and year 5/6
- Leadership opportunities and role modelling for other students through the buddies and senior leadership roles.
- Playground and classroom management plans implemented by teachers in consultation with the principal and SSSO staff
- Clearly defined classroom expectations that are developed by each grade
- Transition programs and strategies for all students

- reflection and monitoring
- Personal and educational learning goals set by students within appropriate programs
- Individual Education Plans that are developed in consultation with teachers, the Principal and SSSO's
- Guidance Officer support for students, teachers and parents/carers
- Various teaching and learning strategies which cater for different learning styles eg. individual, group, team, mixed ages on special theme days

- Blooms Taxonomy,
- Focus questions, understandings and skills for every inquiry unit of work clearly programmed. Skills to be covered explicitly in ICT, Communication, Thinking, Interpersonal and Personal Learning in all units of work as well as the core curriculum areas.
- The initial investigation and trial of E5 instructional tool in lesson and unit work planning-engage, explore, explain, elaborate and evaluate
- Use of *assessment for, by and of* learning to ensure purpose teaching and learning
- Teacher, self and peer assessment through student/teacher negotiated rubrics.
- Specific learning styles are catered for in all classrooms.

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.

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 the School Community

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.

Rights and Responsibilities of Students

Rights	Responsibilities
Students have a right to:	Students have a responsibility to:
• 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	• 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
• 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	Parents/carers have a responsibility to: • 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 • 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.

Rights and Responsibilities of Teachers

Rights	Responsibilities
Teachers have a right to • 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	Teachers have a responsibility to • 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.

This is achieved through staff, students and the school community working together using a challenging environment where all students are supported to take responsibility for their personal, social and academic learning empowering them to become productive members of their community.

<u>Expectations of the Principal</u>

- Provide leadership.
- Ensure staff, students and the school community understand their Expectations.
- Support staff and students with the resources and support required to assist them in the process of teaching and learning.
- Ensure that the curriculum of the school caters for the needs of all students and that the school responds appropriately to students' needs.
- Lead all sections of the school community in working together to provide a positive and engaging learning community

<u>Expectations of the Teachers</u>

- Aim to provide a challenging curriculum that provides for different learning styles and rates of learning including providing Individual Education Plans
- Know, understand and provide the optimal learning environment for students.
- Provide appropriate intervention in response to student needs both academically and socially.
- Encourage student voice, equal opportunity to participate and value student contributions.
- Work with parents/carers and students in developing and striving toward student learning goals.
- Develop the capacity to utilise a range of teaching strategies and resources to provide an engaging learning environment.

<u>Expectations of the Educational Support Staff</u>

- Support teachers in providing engaging learning opportunities for all students
- Contribute to student wellbeing through a variety of levels of support
- Be accessible and maintain confidentiality

<u>Expectations of the Students</u>

- Develop as individual learners through goal setting and the support of teachers.
- Participate in school programs using positive and appropriate behaviours and the school's agreed values.
- Attend regularly.
- Value school resources.

Expectations of the Parents/Carers

- Take an active interest in their child's educational progress and wellbeing.
- Cooperate with the school and communicate regularly in a constructive manner.
- Ensure their children attend school and promote positive educational attitudes.

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 whole school 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.

Student management

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. 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/tchhrcharter.htm http://www.austlii.edu.au/au/legis/vic/consol_act/cohrara2006433/
Equal Opportunity Act	http://www.det.vic.gov.au/hrweb/divequity/eeo/eeoact.htm
Education and	http://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/directions/reviewleg.htm

Training Reform Act 2006	
VIT Teacher Code of Conduct	http://www.vit.vic.edu.au/files/documents/1543_Code-of-Conduct-June-2008.pdf