

STUDENT WELLBEING AND ENGAGEMENT POLICY

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.

Diamond Valley 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

Diamond Valley College serves a range of distinct and diverse communities. These include the nearby communities of Diamond Creek, Wattle Glen and Hurstbridge; the more rural areas of Kinglake, Arthurs Creek, Strathewen, St Andrews, Panton Hill and Kangaroo Ground; and the growth corridor through Mernda and Doreen. As a result more than 500 students travel to school by bus. Student enrolment was 615 in 2019. The college has a current capacity for up to 850 students. .

Diamond Valley College is committed to fostering a sense of respect, responsibility and excellence and is dedicated to inspiring a passion for lifelong learning. On their learning journey, students are engaged with a broad and challenging education where high expectations enable them to establish a

foundation for success in their chosen pathways. The school provides an environment of positive and strong relationships in which the individual is valued. Students are nurtured in their personal and social development as they build resilience and connectedness to peers, school and community. Individuals are encouraged to achieve their personal best in all areas of their learning in the classroom and beyond. They learn how to become responsible, enterprising and active members of society who make a positive contribution to the local and global communities.

Curriculum and student management are organised via Junior (7-9) and Senior (10-12) Sub schools. A comprehensive core curriculum is in place at Years 7 and 8. An elective program at Year 9 aims to increase our students' engagement with their learning. The Year 10 program is connected vertically with Years 11 & 12 to provide advanced placement units, prepare students for senior study and provide access to VCE, VET and VCAL courses. DVC provides extensive opportunities for students to participate in extension and enrichment activities, extra-curricular academic, sporting and cultural events and to accept leadership responsibilities. For a medium sized school the College has enjoyed great success in this area.

2. School values, philosophy and vision

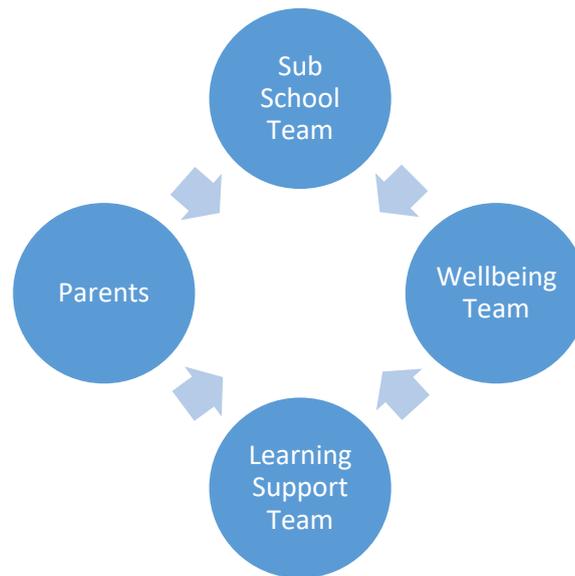
To relate to and be consistent with the 'Effective Schools are Engaging Schools: [Student Engagement Policy Guidelines](#), in areas such as the encouragement of educational achievement and excellence, prevention of absences and inappropriate behaviour.

This requires Diamond Valley College

- To foster a healthy school culture in which high levels of achievement take place within a positive social environment through engagement.
- To provide students with a safe learning environment where the risk of harm is minimised and students feel physically and emotionally secure.
- To provide support for individual circumstances when a student begins to disengage from their learning, when regular attendance is not consistent or positive behaviours are not demonstrated.
- To maximise student learning opportunities and performance through engagement, extension and enrichment.
- To implement a restorative approach as an underlying principle in relation to student engagement and wellbeing.
- To provide and implement programs such as mind matters to foster positive and respectful relationships
- To strongly encourage parent participation and voice.
- To provide genuine opportunities for student/parent participation and student/parent voice.
- To build a school environment based on positive behaviours and values.
- To provide prevention and early intervention for all students at risk.

The wellbeing of our students is a whole school concern and the individual needs of each young person will be taken in to account when providing support. It is important to us that students feel safe, valued and respected and we expect them, along with staff and parents to uphold the college values of respect, responsibility and excellence.

3. Engagement strategies



Preventative/protective	Emerging needs	Chronic/complex	Postvention/recovery
Whole school student wellbeing and engagement to build belonging and promote wellbeing, eg. school structure, student leadership, celebration & recognition	Targeted support for students who have or are at risk of mild to moderate wellbeing concerns, eg. targeted programs, individual support, special provision.	Acute treatment and care for students with diagnosable moderate to severe wellbeing issues, eg. SSSO assessments and support.	Managing and limiting the impact of trauma to aid recovery and restore wellbeing, eg. emergency response, critical incident plans.
Internal Supports			
Teachers, Wellbeing Leaders, Year Level Leaders, Sub School Leaders, SSSOs, Learning Support team, Mind Matters team, Pastoral Care/Pathways program, Mentor program	Teachers, Safeminds Program, Wellbeing Leader, Year Level Leaders, Sub School Leaders, SSSOs, Learning Support team, Mind Matters team. PastoralCare/Pathways program	Wellbeing Leader, Sub School Leaders, SSSOs, Learning Support Team, Principal Class	Principal Class, Wellbeing team, SSSOs.
External Supports			
Nillumbik Community Health, Nillumbik Council, SFYS secondary consult with Austin CAMHS, Headspace, Mindmatters, Beyond Blue, Mental Health promotion organisations, Healing Minds, youth worker, SWC Networks	Nillumbik Community Health Services, Headspace centres and eHeadspace, Specialist and Support Services eg. Berry Stree, GPs and Psychologists through Healing Minds, youth worker, SWC networks	Austin CAMHS, GPs and Psychologists through Healing Minds, DHS, Family First, CASA	SSSOs, Headspace School Support: Suicide Response, Dof ECritical Response, Emergency Management, Wellbeing Support.

4. Student rights and responsibilities

The Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act (2006) 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 them when making decisions and delivering services.

The following legislation needs to be considered when determining rights and responsibilities of all members of the school community:

1. Equal Opportunity Act 1995
2. Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006
3. Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (in conjunction with DEECD Disability Standards for Education 2005)
4. Education and Training Reform Act 2006
5. Education Act 1958

The college supports the implementation of DET policy and guidelines. These documents respond to

- Whole college procedures
- Individual health and well being
- Workplace governance
- Grievances
- Communication processes
- Educational practice

Students	Have the right to <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learn • Be treated fairly and courteously • Ask for and receive support from teachers, administration, parents and when appropriate students • A safe, clean and healthy school environment 	Have the responsibility to <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Punctually attend all classes in College uniform and with correct equipment • Respect others' opinions and be cooperative, committed and engaged • Respect property • Care for others, physically and verbally and behave in a socially acceptable manner
Staff	Have the right to <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teach • Be treated fairly and courteously by students, parents and colleagues • Ask for and receive support from colleagues, administration, parents and students • A safe, clean and healthy school environment 	Have the responsibility to <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain a knowledge of the curriculum and how students learn • Communicate clear expectations • Model respect, fair treatment and problem solving behaviour • Model professionalism, participate in meetings, share ideas, support colleagues • Promote a positive and cooperative school atmosphere
Parents	Have the right to <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be fully informed of their child's progress 	Have the responsibility to <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Actively participate in their child's education by sending them to school • Attend parent teacher sessions and information sessions

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have access to their child’s teachers through appropriate channels • Be provided with information on general school activities • Be involved in the decision making processes of the school (as determined by DET policies) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assist their child with work and with study habits where appropriate • Maintain close communication with the school and support school programs and policies
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5. 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.

6. Bullying and Cyber-bullying

Diamond Valley College takes a zero tolerance approach to bullying. Schools should be safe places for everyone - students, teachers and other staff, families and members of the local community. The involvement and commitment of the whole school community is required to achieve a culture in which safe and respectful schools are everyone’s concern and responsibility. Teachers and other staff at Diamond Valley College have a responsibility to ensure students are safe within the school and broader online learning environments. They should make certain there is every opportunity for students to alert teachers and other staff to any concerns they have about safety or wellbeing.

Definitions

Bullying is when someone, or a group of people, deliberately upset or hurt another person or damage their property, reputation or social acceptance on more than one occasion. There is an imbalance of power in incidents of bullying with the bully or bullies having more power at the time due to age, size, status or other reasons.

Bullying may occur because of perceived differences such as culture, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, ability or disability, religion, body size and physical appearance, age or economic status. Bullying may be motivated by jealousy, distrust, fear, misunderstanding or lack of knowledge. It can continue over time, is often hidden from adults and will probably continue if no action is taken.

Types of bullying

Direct physical bullying: includes hitting, kicking, tripping, pinching and pushing or damaging property.

Direct verbal bullying: includes name calling, insults, teasing, intimidation, homophobic or racist remarks, or verbal abuse.

Indirect bullying: is often harder to recognise and can be carried out behind the bullied person's back. It is designed to harm someone's social reputation and/or cause humiliation. Indirect bullying includes: lying and spreading rumours, playing nasty jokes to embarrass and humiliate, mimicking, encouraging others to socially exclude someone, damaging someone's social reputation or social acceptance.

Cyberbullying: is direct verbal or indirect bullying behaviours using digital technologies. This includes harassment via a mobile phone, setting up a defamatory personal website or deliberately excluding someone from social networking spaces.

Responding to Challenging Behaviour

Students are expected to support and demonstrate the values of Respect, Responsibility and Excellence:

To promote the college values students are expected to:	Appropriate responses to minor/initial incidents	Major or Repeated Incidents
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider the needs of all members of the college community Think of ways for them to be accepting and tolerant of others Encourage everyone to maintain a safe environment Promote student voice, while accepting the opinions of others Strive to always do one's best 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Speak to student Student to reflect on incident (Student Incident report may be completed) Reflection Sheet may allow opportunity for student to take responsibility for actions and repair damage done to people or property Recess or lunch time detention 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parents contacted Withdrawal of privileges with explanation of how behaviour impacts our experience After school detention Saturday morning detention Behaviour Management plan Counselling Student Support Group In School suspension Suspension Expulsion

NB Corporal Punishment is prohibited in all Victorian schools. Corporal Punishment must not be used at Diamond Valley college under any circumstances.

Detention

Teachers may require a student to finish schoolwork, which has not been completed in the regular classroom, or to undertake additional or new work or duties at a reasonable time and place. Alternatively a detention may be issued as a consequence for inappropriate behavior and/or disruption to the learning environment. A recess or lunchtime detention may not exceed half of the allocated break period. Where students are required to undertake detention out of school hours, the time should not exceed forty-five minutes (45). Parents are informed at least 24 hours prior to the

detention. Where family circumstances are such that the detention would create undue hardship, Diamond Valley College may choose to negotiate alternative disciplinary measures with parents.

Diamond Valley College is permitted to detain students, but will take into account family circumstances and negotiate with parents as appropriate.

If a student due to an approved absence misses a detention, the detention will be reissued at a time convenient to the issuing teacher. If a student misses a detention intentionally they will be issued the next level of consequence, for example;

Missed recess detention	lunch time detention
Missed lunch time detention	after school detention
Missed after school detention	parent contact and reissue of after school detention or Saturday morning detention
Missed Saturday detention	parent contact and reissue of detention ☒suspension

Student Support Group

A Student Support Group may be convened by Diamond Valley College to exchange information and facilitate solutions to behavioral problems or difficulties of students. In general, they will be convened at the school, although they could occur at alternative locations agreed to by the school and parents.

These meetings are to be held at a time suitable both to the school and to the parents. The purpose of procedures for such meetings will vary depending on the needs of individuals and schools, but they promote positive behaviors through a staged response. As well as teachers, parents and student, the meeting could involve a person requested by the parents who is not acting for fee or reward, principal or nominee and any support staff who have been involved with the student and/or the student's family or who have particular relevant expertise. If the principal considers it warranted, or the student or the student's parents request, the principal must ensure suitable language interpretation facilities are made available.

A brief written statement including a list of participants and agreed outcomes should be maintained to assist future problem-solving processes at the school. The statement should be verified by the parents and/or student and remain confidential.

Exclusion

Details of suspension and expulsion procedures are discussed below, however, it should be noted that parents are to be involved in exclusion procedures as stated, except where:

- The student is over 18 years of age
- The student is over 16 years of age, without disability or impairment and is living separately, apart and independently from his/her parents

If for any reason the parent is not available or cannot be contacted, the principal may then refer to an adult whom the principal considers to be suitable and available to perform the role of the parent.

Where a student has a disability or impairment, the principal must make enquiries as to the student's ability to represent him or herself. After making such enquiries, if the principal is satisfied that the student lacks the ability to adequately represent himself or herself, the student cannot be referred to in place of 'a parent'. In this case, as with a student under 18 years of age, the principal may regard as 'a parent' an adult whom the principal considers to be suitable and available to perform the role of the parent.

Major Infringements: Suspension Guidelines

Suspension is the process of excluding a student from the standard instruction or educational opportunities being provided to other students at the school for part of a day, a full day, or multiple days. Suspension is a serious disciplinary measure and is best reserved for incidents when other measures have not produced a satisfactory response. The procedures for suspension are set out in **Ministerial Order 625** and includes the criteria listed above as major infringements as the grounds for suspension.

The following are considered major infringements as defined in the suspension guidelines. Students are not automatically suspended for such infringements and one of the above courses of action may be taken first:

Behaves in such a way as to pose a danger, whether actual, perceived or threatened, to the health, safety or wellbeing of any person;
Causes significant damage to or destruction of property;
Commits or attempts to commit or is knowingly involved in the theft of property;
Possesses, uses or sells or deliberately assists another person to possess, use or sell illicit substances or weapons;
Fails to comply with any clear and reasonable instruction of a staff member so as to pose a danger, whether actual, perceived or threatened, to the health, safety or wellbeing of any person;
Consistently engages in behaviour that vilifies, defames, degrades or humiliates another person based on age; breastfeeding; gender; identity; impairment; industrial activity; lawful sexual activity; marital status; parent/carer status or status as a carer; physical features; political belief or activity; pregnancy; race; religious belief or activity; sex; sexual orientation; personal association (whether as a relative or otherwise) with a person who is identified by reference to any of the above attributes;
Consistently behaves in an unproductive manner that interferes with the wellbeing, safety or educational opportunities of any other student.

In order for suspension to be an option, the following conditions must be in place:

The student's behaviour must have occurred:

- whilst attending school;**
- or travelling to or from school;**
- or while engaged in any school activity away from the school;**
- or travelling to or from any school activity.**

Only principals have authority to make the final decision to suspend a student. This authority cannot be delegated. School staff may provide advice to inform the principal's decision whether to suspend a student and may assist in the management of the student's behaviour and/or in communications with the parents, carers or relevant persons. Principals hold ultimate responsibility for ensuring that all processes are followed correctly.

In school suspensions

When considering the decision to suspend a student, it may also be useful to explore an in-school suspension. An in-school suspension is where the student is excluded from the standard instruction or educational opportunities being provided to other students, but can still undertake educational activities on the school premises for the period of the suspension.

In-school suspensions should focus on encouraging the student to exhibit more positive behaviour, to increase their level of participation and where appropriate, to learn problem solving and/or conflict resolution skills.

The same process (including record-keeping) must be followed for in-school suspension as for out of school suspensions.

Immediate suspensions

The principal may implement a suspension with immediate effect if the student's behaviour is such that they are putting the health, safety and wellbeing of themselves, or any other person at significant risk. Where an immediate suspension is imposed, the principal has a duty of care to provide supervision of the student until they can be collected by a parent, carer, or an emergency contact nominated by the parent or carer. If the parent, carer or emergency contact is unable to collect the student, the student must be adequately supervised by a member of staff until the end of the school day. It may be appropriate to implement a suspension with an immediate effect whilst the student is on an excursion or school camp. In these situations, if a student's parent, carer or emergency contact is unable to collect the student, they will need to be supervised until the end of the camp or excursion. If this is the case, it is suggested that the student be removed from any activity organised as part of the excursion or camp. It may also be suitable to assign the student an appropriate task or school work to go on with.

Period of suspension

Suspending a student can have serious implications for the student's engagement in learning therefore suspension should be applied for the shortest time necessary. In determining the period of suspension, the principal must note:

- The period of suspension must not exceed five school days.
- The suspension must not result in the student being suspended for more than 15 school days in the school year unless there is prior written approval from the Regional Director. To seek approval from the Regional Director you can use the [Request for Approval - Suspension Over 15 Days Form](#)
- If the period of the suspension is longer than the days left in the term, the principal should consider the likely disruption to the student's learning before imposing a suspension that will continue into the following term.

The relevant person

Due to the seriousness of suspension and expulsion, **Ministerial Order 625** requires that students who are subject to suspension and/or expulsion processes have a 'relevant person' to participate in the process to support and advocate for them. For most students this will be a parent or carer. In situations where the parent or carer is unavailable or unwilling to act as the relevant person for their child, they can nominate an alternative relevant person.

Suspension of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Students

When considering a suspension for an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander student, a principal should engage a Koorie Engagement Support Officer (KESO). The KESO can support the school and the family to find the best outcome for the student and also connect the school and family to any local or regional resources to assist.

Students with separated parents

For students who have separated parents, it is important to remember that suspension and expulsion are serious disciplinary measures and therefore all parents and carers are entitled to be notified of

the intention to suspend or expel the student. In circumstances where there is more than one parent or carer who would like to participate in the suspension and expulsion process, it is important to involve all of them in the process.

Expulsion Guidelines

Expulsion is the process of permanently excluding the student from the school in which he or she is currently enrolled. As the most extreme disciplinary measure available to a principal, it should only be used after other forms of behaviour management have been exhausted and the school can demonstrate evidence that this has occurred. The student's behaviour must also be of such magnitude that expulsion is the only available mechanism.

Expulsion cannot not be implemented as a consequence for events of a novel nature such as one-off pranks that do not cause any harm to other students or members of the school community. Grounds and procedures for expulsion are set out in **Ministerial Order 625**:

Grounds for expulsion

In order for expulsion to be an option, the following conditions must be in place:

The student's behaviour must have occurred:

- whilst attending school; or
- travelling to or from school; or
- while engaged in any school activity away from the school; or
- travelling to or from any school activity

The student's behaviour must meet one or more of the following conditions:

Behaves in such a way as to pose a danger, whether actual, perceived or threatened, to the health, safety or wellbeing of any person;
Causes significant damage to or destruction of property;
Commits or attempts to commit or is knowingly involved in the theft of property;
Possesses, uses or sells or deliberately assists another person to possess, use or sell illicit substances or weapons;
Fails to comply with any clear and reasonable instruction of a staff member so as to pose a danger, whether actual, perceived or threatened, to the health, safety or wellbeing of any person;
Consistently engages in behaviour that vilifies, defames, degrades or humiliates another person based on age; breastfeeding; gender; identity; impairment; industrial activity; lawful sexual activity; marital status; parent/carer status or status as a carer; physical features; political belief or activity; pregnancy; race; religious belief or activity; sex; sexual orientation; personal association (whether as a relative or otherwise) with a person who is identified by reference to any of the above attributes;
Consistently behaves in an unproductive manner that interferes with the wellbeing, safety or educational opportunities of any other student.

The student's behaviour must also be of such magnitude that expulsion is the only available mechanism. In this regard, the principal must consider the need of the student to receive an education compared to the need to maintain the health, safety and wellbeing of other students and staff at the school and the need to maintain the effectiveness of the school's educational programs. Under Victorian Law, in deciding whether to expel a student, principals must undertake an assessment of that course of action under the Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006. In addition, when determining whether to expel a student with a disability, principals must be sure that reasonable adjustments have been made to assist the student to manage the behaviours where this is a manifestation of disability.

Authority to expel a student

Only principals have authority to make the final decision to expel a student. This authority cannot be delegated.

School staff may provide advice to inform the principal's decision whether to expel a student and may assist in the management of the student's behaviour and/or in communications with the parents, carers or relevant persons. Principals hold ultimate responsibility for ensuring that all processes are followed correctly.

Removing a student from school while considering an expulsion

If a student's behaviour is serious enough to warrant expulsion and poses danger to staff and students, a suspension with immediate effect may be implemented while the expulsion is being considered.

If consideration and/or implementation of an expulsion is going to take longer than the maximum suspension period of five consecutive days, principals can apply to the Regional Director for an extension.

Students in Out-of-home Care

The Out-of-Home Care Education Commitment: A Partnering Agreement between the Department of Human Services, Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, the Catholic Education Commission of Victoria and Independent Schools Victoria (the Partnering Agreement) commits all parties to improve the educational experience and outcomes of children and young people in out-of-home care in Victoria.

FURTHER INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

See Diamond Valley College Policies:

- Statement of Values and School Philosophy
- Bullying Prevention
- Child Safe Standards

REVIEW CYCLE

This policy was last updated in May 2019 and ratified by council on 17th June, 2019 and is scheduled for review in June 2021.