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 all 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.

Croydon Special Developmental School (Croydon SDS) 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, excursions and out of hours school programs.

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POLICY

1. School profile

Croydon Special Developmental School is a school for students with moderate to severe intellectual disabilities. some students may also have a diagnosis of autism and/or physical disabilities.

The school strongly advocates the philosophy that all students will be given every opportunity to reach their full potential and all individuals be encouraged to strive towards maximum independence. The learning experiences, quality of life and needs of students will be central to all decision making. A positive self-image is crucial to the learning process and is nurtured ensuring each student

experiences success. The school is implementing the School Wide Positive Behaviour Support framework. Our school values are Care, Share and Do Your Best.

In addition to teachers and classroom education support staff, we have an allied health team, (physiotherapist, occupational therapist, speech pathologists and allied health assistants), who support classroom staff and enhance student participation in the curriculum. We also have a Family Support Coordinator supporting families and a nurse who supports the health of students at school. We value the diversity of cultures within our school, and acknowledge the Aboriginal people of Australia as the traditional custodians of this land. We are also committed to the cultural safety of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, the cultural safety of children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, and to providing a safe environment for children with a disability.

2. School values, philosophy and vision (Please refer to our Statement of Values and Philosophy for more information).

Our Values

Our school is committed to providing a safe, secure and stimulating learning environment for all students. We believe students can only reach their full educational learning potential when they are happy, healthy, safe and engaged, which is why we have developed a positive school culture which is focused on fully supporting student participation and engagement. Our school acknowledges that student wellbeing and student learning outcomes are inextricably linked, and we address this directly in our School-wide Positive Behaviour Support (SWPBS) approach. Please refer to our school's *SWPBS Handbook* for more information. Our SWPBS approach focuses on supporting student well-being and engagement by teaching and reinforcing behaviours which link to our school values. These values are:

Care – for yourself, for other people, for property, for the environment

Share – with people – things, ideas, times, take turns

Do your best – try hard, have a go, persist – do not give up.

A specific set of expected behaviours related to these values are displayed in all classrooms. Behaviours which demonstrate these values are consistently taught, practiced and reinforced across all school environments.

3. Engagement strategies

Our school has in place a range of strategies to promote engagement, positive behaviour and respectful relationships for all students in the school. We recognise that some students, as a group or as individuals may need extra social, emotional or educational support in order to flourish at school, and so we have strategies in place to identify these students and provide them with the support they need.

Our school works collaboratively with students and parents / carers to establish fair and respectful behaviour policies and practices based on the school's values, expected social competencies and positive peer relationships. There are also intervention strategies in place to address inappropriate behaviours which can negatively impact on the learning environment of the student themselves and others. These intervention strategies are part of our SWPBS approach, and may range from Tier 1 to Tier 3 intervention strategies, depending on the specific needs of the student.

IMPLEMENTATION

Our staff, programs and policies support student engagement at Croydon SDS in the following ways:

- Student attendance is recorded and monitored on a daily basis, and encouraged by:
  - Individual student learning plans (ILPs) addressing individual needs, interests and skills, including inquiry based unit enrichment activities, curriculum content, and individual learning goals
  - Friendly, professional and positive staff who effectively implement SWPBS strategies across all school environments
  - Special responsibilities and activities for students), and
  - Positive relationships developed with students and their families / carers through open communication
- We promote gender equality and respectful relationships.

Positive (pro-social) behaviour is encouraged by
- The use of positive reward programs (e.g., Token Reward System)
- The provision of programs to practise social behaviours (e.g. eating/drinking appropriately, social skills development, dressing programs and so on)
- The provision of opportunities to practise pro-social behaviour in the community (e.g., excursions, camps and so on)
- Social skills, play therapy and play skills programs
- The development of individual social stories and video models to promote positive and appropriate behaviour
- The provision of structures to support positive behaviour including the development of individual Behaviour Support Plans
- The development of appropriate individualised communication systems/programs **Student well-being is addressed by:**
- The ILP process leading to the development of individual programs
- The inclusion of all students through programs incorporating different learning styles, teaching methods and strategies
- Specialist programs including media, art, sport, swimming and therapy
- The development of a SWPBS team
- The implementation of SWPBS strategies/processes across all school environments
- Communication supports: including Picture Exchange Communication System, Pragmatic Organised Dynamic Display and intensive interaction
- Provision of a safe and caring environment
- Student Support Groups (SSGs)
- A collaborative team approach: Teachers, Education Support Officers, Speech Pathologists, Occupational Therapists, Physiotherapist, Family Support Coordinator, and
- Appropriate professional development for staff in health management, SWPBS, communication, and teaching and learning

4. Identifying students in need of support

Our school will utilise the following information and tools to identify students in need of extra support by using the following strategies:
- Personal information gathered upon enrolment
- Attendance rates
- Academic performance, particularly in literacy and numeracy assessments
- Behaviour observed by classroom staff **AND** reported on our Behaviour Reporting System
- PBS Referrals, and

- Engagement with student families

5. Student rights and responsibilities

All members of our school community have a right to experience a safe and supportive school environment. We expect that all students, staff, parents and carers treat each other with respect and dignity. Our school's Statement of Values highlights the rights and responsibilities of members of our community.

Students have the right to:

- participate fully in their education
- feel safe, secure and happy at school
- learn in an environment free from bullying, harassment, violence, discrimination or intimidation
- express their ideas, feelings and concerns.

Students are expected to:
- Care, share and do their best
- Be willing and able learners
- Attend school regularly
- Respect the rights of others through positive interaction with staff and other students
- Engage and respond to the programs offered
- Behave in a manner which does not put themselves or others at risk, and
- Express their wants, needs, choices, interests, decisions

Students who may have a complaint or concern about something that has happened at school are encouraged to speak to their parents or carers and approach a trusted teacher or a member of the school leadership team.

6. Student behavioural expectations

Responding to behaviours of concern
Rationale:
- Students who attend a special school setting may exhibit behaviours that are of concern. These behaviours are often associated with the student's disability, and may involve medical or health issues. Behaviours may also indicate communication and/or sensory difficulties.
- At Croydon SDS, we believe that **all** behaviour has a specific function/purpose. We recognise that students with an intellectual disability may have impairment in the areas of communication and social skill development; therefore, students at Croydon SDS often require an individualised approach that focuses on: understanding the individual's learning/emotional needs; having knowledge of the triggers that give rise to behaviours of concern; and, adapting the environment to avoid triggers.

Aims:
- At Croydon SDS we aim to address student behaviour in a way that promotes positive supportive behaviour strategies and skill development, whilst also minimizing any risk to students or staff.

Guidelines:
At Croydon SDS, staff use the SWPBS approach to support student behaviour. Recommended strategies include:
- Providing an effective communication system

- Teaching expected behaviours/skills using modelling, visual aids, video self-models and social stories
- Providing opportunities for the students to practice and perfect the behaviour/skill learned
- Reviewing, correcting and testing the behaviour/skill learned
- Embedding the behaviour/skill in the daily curriculum
- Using positive rewards and reinforcement to encourage the expected behaviour, and
- Ignoring incorrect, attention-seeking behaviours where appropriate by going neutral
- We also believe that student welfare and student behaviour support is a shared responsibility for all staff. All major incidents are recorded on our Behaviour Incident template
- If staff, parents, volunteers or any member of the school community have concerns about student behaviour they are encouraged to bring it to the attention of teaching staff, Section Team Leaders, the SWPBS team, Assistant Principal or Principal.
- Behaviours of concern can be addressed through a SWPBS meeting called by a staff member or parent/carer. Staff are encouraged to bring data about the behaviour to the meeting. Recommendations for student behaviour support will be made and are expected to be followed through.
- If a BSP is developed, it will be endorsed by the parent / carer the SWPBS team and the principal.
- Behaviour support can also be addressed through a Student Support Group Behaviour Review Meeting. A SSSO, a member of the Leadership team, therapist, and/or a member of the SWPBS team may be a member of the Student Support Group in this instance.
- Through the process of discussion and consultation with parents/carers, the class teacher, the SWPBS team, and/or the Principal / Assistant Principal, a BSP or Safety Plan may be developed. The plan must be endorsed by the parent / carer and a member of the SWPBS team when finalised.
- All BSPs and Safety Plans will be documented and filed.   A copy will be placed in the student's confidential file, in the student's file on the administration network and in the teacher's classroom file. A copy will also be forwarded to all members of the Student Support Group, and placed in the Student Safety Plan folders in the classroom, school section, admin and relevant school areas, eg pool.
- It is the responsibility of the classroom teacher to ensure that all relevant staff be informed of the BSP / Safety Plan. Information should also be provided at Section Meetings if required. All staff are expected to follow the plan.
- Curriculum development and implementation will support the development of responsible behaviours to replace behaviours of concern (e.g., Respectful Relationships curriculum, SoSAFE!, self-regulation strategies).
- **Restraint or seclusion must only be used if it is immediately required to protect the safety of the student or any other person, and no other option is available.** If any form of restraint or seclusion is used the following must take place as soon as is practical:
  - A Restraint / Seclusion Proforma is completed on the day of the incident.
  - The Principal is notified.
  - The parent is contacted by either the Principal or nominee or class teacher ○ DET Security services are notified by the Principal or nominee
  - The event is recorded on the student's file on CASES 21 or SOCS as appropriate
- O.H. & S. representatives, in consultation with therapists, are available to work with staff to provide risk management and assistance where needed for students who require assistance to stand and / or move.

Corporal Punishment is prohibited in all Victorian schools.

Corporal punishment must NOT be used at the School under any circumstances.
Our school has a commitment to zero tolerance of child abuse.

School Actions and Consequences
- Student engagement, regular attendance and appropriate behaviour are encouraged through the implementation of SWPBS strategies, and are supported through targeted and individualised support when required (e.g. Behaviour Support Plan / Safety Plan)
- Actions and consequences are incremental (a staged response) and will be applied fairly and consistently.
- Positive reinforcement is instrumental in Croydon SDS' approach to supporting student engagement
- Actions and consequences that isolate or exclude a student from learning are **not to be used**

The following whole-school and classroom practices articulate Croydon SDS' philosophy of actions and consequences:
- Predictable and fair classroom and school environments
- Student participation in the development of classroom expectations regarding student behaviour
- Personalised (individualised) student learning programs documented in ILP's
- Acknowledgement of students via:
- Natural verbal and social reinforcement
- Classroom positive behaviour support programs (e.g., the Gotcha System)
- Student of the week awards
- Newsletter articles where appropriate
- School- wide positive behaviour support strategies, and
- A commitment to de-escalating situations in which students are displaying inappropriate behaviours

Discipline procedures
Inappropriate behaviours will be responded to through a staged response including early intervention / prevention strategies.
Prevention and early intervention may include:
- Understanding individual student needs
- Providing clear expectations of students
- Providing consistent school and classroom environments
- Providing individual positive reinforcement programs
- Frequent communications between teachers and parents/ carers
- Implementing effective responses to inappropriate behaviour (e.g., going neutral)

When an on-going problem becomes apparent, the following steps should be followed:
1. Information should be recorded on our major behaviours recording template
2. Staff may invite a SWPBS team member to observe the student in the classroom (SWPBS Referral)
3. The parent / carer should be contacted
4. Support should be provided by the SWPBS team (e.g., follow up on the SWPBS Referral)
5. A SSG meeting should be held in collaboration with the parents/carers and the SWPBS team if appropriate to develop a BSP or Student Safety Plan. The BSP should have a date listed to review the plan in order to evaluate the successfulness of it.
6. The BSP should be signed off by a SWPBS team member, the teacher and the parents/carer.

7. The BSP should be shared with all relevant staff.
8. The strategies outlined in the BSP should be implemented and monitored.

Suspension and expulsion are measures of last resort and may only be used in particular situations consistent with Department policy, available at:
http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/participation/pages/engagement.aspx

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

7. Engaging with families

Croydon SDS values the input of parents and carers, and we will strive to support families to engage in their child's learning and build their capacity as active learners. We aim to be partners in learning with parents and carers in our school community.

Our school values parent/carer input into its operations and curriculum, and seeks feedback through the Parent Opinion survey, and parent representatives on School Council.

Our school is committed to supporting families to engage in their child's learning and build their capacity as active learners. To enable this, we provide an environment that welcomes all parents/carers, and recognises them as partners in learning.
The school will create successful partnerships with parents/carers and families by:
- ensuring all parents/carers are aware of the school's Student Engagement Policy
- conducting effective school-to-home and home-to-school communications
- providing volunteer opportunities to enable parents/carers and students to contribute
- involving families with homework and/or other curriculum-related activities
- providing PBS and SoSafe! Training and support to families
- involving families as participants in school decision-making
- coordinating resources and services from the community for families, students and the school, and
- involving families in Student Support Groups

8. Evaluation

Croydon SDS will collect data each year to understand the frequency and types of wellbeing issues that are experienced by our students so that we can measure the success or otherwise of our school based strategies and identify emerging trends or needs.

Sources of data that will be assessed on an annual basis include:

- school level report data
- parent opinion survey data
- data from case management work with students
- data extracted from our behaviour reporting system
- SWPBS referrals
- CASES21
- SOCS

FURTHER INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

Statement of School Values and Philosophy, Bullying Prevention, Child Safe Standards Policies

This policy is informed by the Department of Education and Training Student Engagement and inclusion Guidance available at:

https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/student-engagement/policy

REVIEW CYCLE

This policy was last updated in April, 2019 and is scheduled for review in April 2021.