



CROYDON SDS

STUDENT WELLBEING AND ENGAGEMENT POLICY



Help for non-English speakers

If you need help to understand the information in this policy please contact the school office on ph 9725 4933 or by email at croydon.sds@education.vic.gov.au

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, inclusive 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 student behaviour that does not align with our school behaviour expectations.

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 an inclusive and positive school culture. All student participation is encouraged and valued which 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 of care, share, do your best and be safe.

SCOPE

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

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POLICY

1. School profile

Croydon SDS was established on our current site in 1990 and is located approximately 28 kilometres east of Melbourne. Our school grounds back onto native bushland, and we are surrounded by a supportive community.

Croydon SDS is a school for students with a moderate to severe intellectual disability. Some students may also have a diagnosis of autism and/ or physical disabilities.

We offer an Early Education program that caters for children aged 2.8 to 4.8 years who have significant delays in two or more developmental areas, as well as, a Senior Secondary program for our students nearing the end of their schooling, (years 10, 11 and 12).

Our school is culturally diverse with 19% of our families having a language background other than English (LOTE), with the largest LOTE group being Burmese and 5 % of our students with an indigenous background. We are proud of our diversity and inclusive school community.

In addition to teachers and classroom education support staff, we have an allied health team comprising school speech pathologists, occupational therapist, physiotherapist, allied health assistant and school nurse, who work collaboratively with classroom based staff to support student learning and wellbeing.

We strive to provide a nurturing and challenging environment that empowers students to reach their personal best.

Students, staff and members of our school community are encouraged to live and demonstrate our school values which are care, share, do your best and be safe.

2. School values, philosophy and vision

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.

Our school acknowledges that student wellbeing and student learning outcomes are inextricably linked, and we address this directly through our School-wide Positive Behaviour Support (SWPBS) framework. Please refer to our school's *SWPBS Handbook* for more information. Our SWPBS framework 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.

Be safe – Behave in a way that keeps yourself and others safe.

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

We believe in building positive relationships with our school community to provide a holistic and collaborative approach to achieving student learning outcomes. Croydon SDS offers families opportunities to discuss specific learning goals and needs through informal meetings, as well as, formal Student Support Group (SSG) meetings.

Our school's vision is to create success for every student, empowering students to reach their personal best and equipping them to participate in and contribute positively to society as happy, healthy young adults.

3. Wellbeing and engagement strategies

Our school promotes engagement, positive behaviour and respectful relationships for all students in the school. We recognise that students, as a group or as individuals may need extra social, emotional or educational support in order to flourish at school. We acknowledge and respond to the evolving needs of our students as they grow and learn.

Our SWPBS framework provides evidence-based intervention strategies tailored to the student's points of need.

We encourage and provide opportunities for students to contribute to the decision making process regarding what they learn and how they learn. Students have access to appropriate communication supports to assist them to contribute their thoughts and ideas. Croydon SDS promotes student leadership through our school captain roles.

Croydon SDS is implementing the Structuring Functional Independence (SFI) framework as part of our instructional model. The teaching initiative includes a range of evidence-based strategies and approaches to support our students to increase their functional independence.

By embedding both SFI and SWPBS into our teaching model, we aim to create a culture that encourages positive attitudes to learning by providing experiences that are age-appropriate, relevant and motivating.

Croydon SDS also provides educational opportunities outside of the classroom such as incursions, excursions, camps, swimming and community access.

Our school has also implemented the Respectful Relationships initiative which, together with the SoSafe! and eSmart programs, aim to support students to learn how to build healthy relationships, build resilience and cultivate self-confidence.

A summary of the universal (whole of school), targeted (student group specific) and individual engagement strategies used by our school is included below:

Universal

- high and consistent expectations of all staff, students and parents and carers
- prioritise positive relationships between staff and students, recognising the fundamental role this plays in building and sustaining student wellbeing
- creating a culture that is inclusive, engaging and supportive and that embraces and celebrates diversity and empowers all students to participate and feel valued
- welcoming all parents/carers and being responsive to them as partners in learning
- analysing and being responsive to a range of school data such as attendance, parent survey data, student management data and school level assessment data
- deliver a broad curriculum based on Victorian Curriculum from Foundation Levels A-D to level 10 and the Victorian Pathways Certificate for students in their final three years of schooling to ensure that students are able to choose subjects and programs that are tailored to their interests, strengths and aspirations.
- teachers at Croydon SDS use our Curriculum and Instructional framework to ensure an explicit, common and shared model of instruction to ensure that evidenced-based, inclusive teaching practices are incorporated into all lessons.
- teachers at Croydon SDS adopt a broad range of teaching and assessment approaches to effectively respond to the diverse learning styles, strengths and needs of our students and follow the standards set by the Victorian Institute of Teaching
- our school's Statement of Values and School Philosophy are incorporated into our curriculum and promoted to students, staff and parents so that they are shared and celebrated as the foundation of our school community
- carefully planned transition programs to support students moving into different stages of their schooling
- The SWPBS Universal supports team oversees and supports the implementation of universal strategies to promote positive student learning and behaviour.
- positive behaviour and student achievement is acknowledged in the classroom, and through the weekly Principal Awards, school newsletters, home school communication books and parent teacher conversations.
- monitor student attendance and implement attendance improvement strategies at a whole-school, cohort and individual level
- students have the opportunity to contribute to and provide feedback on decisions about school operations through our school captains. Students are also encouraged to speak with their teachers, familiar staff,

Assistant Principal and Principal whenever they have any questions or concerns. Students are able to contribute and provide feedback using the communication tools of their choosing.

- we aim to create opportunities for cross—age connections amongst students through whole school activities, interschool sports and we are working to develop a house teams system and SRC.
- all students are welcome to discuss a particular issue or feel as though they may need support of any kind. We are proud to have an ‘open door’ policy where students and staff are partners in learning. Students are able to seek help using the communication tools of their choosing.
- we engage in school wide positive behaviour support with our staff and students, which includes programs such as:
 - Respectful Relationships
 - Bullying Prevention
 - eSmart – Acceptable Use Agreement
- Opportunities for inclusion for all of our diverse learners
- measures are in place to empower our school community to identify, report and address inappropriate and harmful behaviours such as racism, homophobia and other forms of discrimination or harassment through our *Bullying Prevention Policy*.

Targeted

- Each section of the school (Primary including Early Education, Secondary and Senior Secondary) has a section team leader, a leading teacher/learning specialist who oversees organisation and planning in their section of the school and provides support to students and staff as required.
- The SWPBS (Multi -tiered systems of support team) uses behaviour data to monitor the wellbeing of students across the school, target student supports and act as a point of contact for students who may need additional support
- Koorie students are supported to engage fully in their education, in a positive learning environment that understands and appreciates the strength of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture
- our English as a second language students are supported in our individualised teaching program, and all cultural and linguistically diverse students are supported to feel safe and included in our school
- our families from LOTE backgrounds are also supported through interpreting services during meetings and SSG meetings.
- we support learning and wellbeing outcomes of students from refugee background through our individualised teaching program.
- we provide a positive and respectful learning environment for our students who identify as LGBTIQ+ and follow the Department’s policy on LGBTIQ+ Student Support.
- all students in Out of Home Care are supported in accordance with the Department’s policy on [Supporting Students in Out-of-Home Care](#) including being appointed a Learning Mentor, having an Individual Learning Plan and a Student Support Group (SSG) and being referred to Student Support Services for an Educational Needs Assessment
- students with a disability are supported to be able to engage fully in their learning and school activities in accordance with the Department’s policy on [Students with Disability](#), such as through reasonable adjustments to support access to learning programs, consultation with families and where required, student support groups and individual education plans
- staff will apply a trauma-informed approach to working with students who have experienced trauma
- students enrolled under the Department’s international student program are supported in accordance with our legal obligations and Department policy and guidelines at: [International Student Program](#)
- all students from Year 10 and above will be assisted to develop a Career Action Plan, with targeted goals and support to plan for their future
- Croydon SDS provides learning experiences and makes links with post school providers to provide students with opportunities to explore post school options.

Individual

- [Student Support Groups](#)
- [Individual Education Plans](#)
- [Behaviour Support Plans](#)
- *Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) meetings*

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

- [Disability Inclusion Reform](#)

Croydon SDS implements a range of strategies that support and promote individual engagement. These can include:

- building constructive relationships with students at risk or students who are vulnerable due to complex individual circumstances
- meeting with student and their parent/carer to talk about how best to help the student engage with school
- developing an Individual Learning Plan and/or a Behaviour Support Plan
- considering if any environmental changes need to be made, for example changing the classroom set up
- referring the student to:
 - school-based wellbeing supports
 - Student Support Services
 - Appropriate external supports such as council based youth and family services, other allied health professionals, headspace, child and adolescent mental health services or ChildFirst

Where necessary the school will support the student's family to engage by:

- being responsive and sensitive to changes in the student's circumstances and health and wellbeing
- collaborating, where appropriate and with the support of the student and their family, with any external allied health professionals, services or agencies that are supporting the student
- monitoring individual student attendance and developing an Attendance Improvement Plans in collaboration with the student and their family
- engaging with our regional Koorie Education Support Officers
- running regular Student Support Group meetings for all students including those:
 - in Out of Home Care
 - with other complex needs that require ongoing support and monitoring.

4. Identifying students in need of support

Croydon SDS is committed to providing the necessary support to ensure our students are supported intellectually, emotionally and socially. The MTSS team, leadership team, as well as, classroom and section staff play a significant role in developing and implementing strategies help identify students in need of support and enhance student wellbeing. Croydon SDS will utilise the following information and tools to identify students in need of extra emotional, social or educational support:

- personal, health and learning information gathered upon enrolment and while the student is enrolled
- attendance records
- academic performance
- observations by school staff such as changes in engagement, behaviour, self-care, social connectedness and motivation
- attendance and MTSS data
- engagement with families

- self-referrals or referrals from peers

In the Senior Secondary section, students in years 10, 11 and 12 are provided with every opportunity to succeed. The school works with families to explore a range of pathways options via careers and course counselling, and appropriate to the student's interest, passions and potential pathways, students are able to access courses using reasonable adjustments or special provision. Possible adjustments will be discussed with the student, family and relevant teachers and may include:

- Differentiated learning resources and content delivery.
- Rescheduling classroom activities and/or a school-based assessment task.
- Extra time to complete work or an assessment task.
- Replacing a task with a task of a different kind.
- Using a single task to assess more than one of the learning outcomes.
- Using technology (e.g. laptops), integration aides, or other special arrangements.
- Extensions of time to complete tasks and production items.

Reasonable adjustments or [Special Provision](#) may also be granted for

- Extra time to complete task, rest breaks.
- Alternative tasks (e.g. enlarged print, Braille).
- Use of assistive technology (AAC, scan pens).
- A reader and/or scribe.
- A clarifier.
- Visual supports

All students will be provided with an IEP which is updated termly to reflect a student's progress, and the supports and adjustments in place to help that student to achieve. Any reasonable adjustments or special provisions applied will be in line with VCAA special provisions.

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, racism, discrimination or intimidation
- express their ideas, feelings and concerns using their chosen communication tool.

Students will be supported to:

- participate fully in their educational program
- display positive behaviours that demonstrate respect for themselves, their peers, their teachers and members of the school community
- respect the right of others to learn.

Students who may have a complaint or concern about something that has happened at school are encouraged to speak to their parents or carers and approach a trusted teacher or a member of the school leadership team. Students are provided with multi-modal communication aids to assist them with voicing concerns with their chosen communication supports. Further information about raising a complaint or concern is available in our Complaints Policy.

6. Student behavioural expectations and management

Behavioural expectations of students are grounded in our school values and Expected Behaviour Matrix.

Croydon SDS believes that all behaviour is a form of communication. As such, violence, bullying, and other offensive and harmful behaviours such as racism, harassment and discrimination will be addressed in a supportive, holistic and age-appropriate manner as per the situation. Bullying will be managed in accordance with our Bullying Prevention Policy.

When a student demonstrates the need for additional support to follow the behaviour expectations of our school community, Croydon SDS will institute a staged response through our MTSS team, consistent with the Department's policies on behaviour, discipline and student wellbeing and engagement. Where appropriate, parents will be informed about the behaviour of concern and the interventions taken by teachers and other school staff.

Croydon SDS adopts a collaborative, whole-school, pro-active and positive approach to addressing behaviours of concern through our Schoolwide Positive Behaviour Support Framework. At school, we encourage positive behaviour by:

- Explicit teaching of expected behaviours from our Schoolwide Expected Behaviour Matrix
- 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)
- the provision of opportunities to practise pro-social behaviour in the community (e.g., excursions, camps)
- social skills 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
- teaching expected behaviours/skills using modelling, visual aids, video self-models and social stories
- providing opportunities for the students to practice and make permanent the behaviour/skill learned
- reviewing, correcting and testing the behaviour/skill learned
- embedding the behaviour/skill in the daily curriculum
- the use of 2 part praise to acknowledge the specific behaviour and the school value it is linked with
- 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).

Our school considers, explores and implements positive and non-punitive interventions to support student behaviour. A staged response to inappropriate behaviour is outlined in our Behaviour Response Flow Chart. The MTSS and Universal Supports teams review student behaviour data in combination with other engagement and support strategies to ensure that factors that may have contributed to the student's behaviour are identified and addressed. Interventions at our school will be applied fairly, consistently and in consultation with families through SSG meetings. Students will always be provided with an opportunity to be heard using the communication tools that will be provided to suit their needs.

Intervention measures that may be applied include are outlined in our Behaviour Response Flow Chart and include:

- Reminding students of expected behaviours
- Use of visual and verbal prompts
- Praise any approximations of behaviour
- Re-direction and Re-teaching
- Modifying the task
- Following Student Safety Escalation Plans (if in place)

- Following Crisis Management Plan
- behaviour support and intervention meetings
- suspension
- expulsion

Suspension, expulsion and restrictive interventions are measures of last resort and may only be used in situations consistent with Department policy, available at:

- <https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/suspensions/policy>
- <https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/expulsions/policy>
- <https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/restraint-seclusion/policy>

In line with Ministerial Order 1125, no student aged 8 or younger will be expelled without the approval of the Secretary of the Department of Education.

The Principal of Croydon SDS is responsible for ensuring all suspensions and expulsions are recorded on CASES21.

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

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.

We work hard to create successful partnerships with parents and carers by:

- ensuring that all parents have access to our school policies and procedures, available on our school website
- maintaining an open, respectful line of communication between parents and staff, supported by our Communicating with School Staff policy.
- providing parent volunteer opportunities so that families can contribute to school activities
- involving families with curriculum-related activities
- involving families in school decision making
- coordinating resources and services from the community for families
- including families in Student Support Groups, and developing individual plans for students.

8. Evaluation

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:

- Student behaviour data
- school reports
- parent survey
- case management
- CASES21, including attendance and absence data
- SOCS

Croydon SDS will also regularly monitor available data dashboards to ensure any issues are acted upon in a timely manner and any intervention occurs as soon as possible.

COMMUNICATION

This policy will be communicated to our school community in the following ways

- Available publicly on our school's website
- Included in staff induction processes
- Made available in hard copy from school administration upon request

Our school will also ensure it follows the mandatory parent/carers notification requirements with respect to suspensions and expulsions outlined in the Department's policies at:

- [Suspension process](#)
- [Expulsions - Decision](#)

FURTHER INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

The following Department of Education policies are relevant to this Student Engagement and Wellbeing Policy:

- [Attendance](#)
- [Student Engagement](#)
- [Child Safe Standards](#)
- [Supporting Students in Out-of-Home Care](#)
- [Students with Disability](#)
- [LGBTIQ Student Support](#)
- [Behaviour - Students](#)
- [Suspensions](#)
- [Expulsions](#)
- [Restraint and Seclusion](#)

The following school policies are also relevant to this Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy:

- Child Safety Policy
- Bullying Prevention Policy
- Inclusion and Diversity Policy
- Statement of Values and School Philosophy

POLICY REVIEW AND APPROVAL

Policy last reviewed	June 2026
Consultation	School council 23 June 2026
Approved by	Principal
Next scheduled review date	June 2028