

STUDENT WELLBEING AND ENGAGEMENT POLICY

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that all students and members of our Blackwood Special Schools Outdoor Education Centre (Blackwood) 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.

Blackwood is committed to providing a safe, secure and stimulating learning environment for all students. Blackwood acknowledges that student wellbeing and student learning outcomes are closely linked.

SCOPE

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

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POLICY

1. School profile

Blackwood is a Department of Education and Training (DET) facility for students with a moderate to profound intellectual and/or physical disability. We offer an engaging curriculum in alignment with the Victorian Curriculum. We acknowledge the diversity of learners that access Blackwood and provide a highly individualised program that targets each student at the point at which they have demonstrated a readiness for learning.

Our Blackwood programs engage students from pre-foundation through to programs for 16 to 18 year olds. Our learning priorities are the development of independence, communication and social competencies skills in order to enable students to achieve the highest level of independence over their lives as they move into adulthood.

Blackwood Special Schools Outdoor Education Centre is located within the township of Blackwood surrounded by the Wombat State Forest, offering experiential education opportunities for Victorian students enrolled within Government Special Schools. The majority of students travel to and from Blackwood via DET funded buses and vehicles.

2. School values, philosophy and vision

VISION

At Blackwood students are 'Learning for Life.' Central to all teaching and learning programs is the development of skills in communication, independence and social competencies.

MISSION

Blackwood delivers a quality adventure-based curriculum exclusively to students with special needs. Blackwood engages students to enhance their life skills through participating in lessons that focus on teamwork, resilience and personal challenge.

VALUES

The following values are seen as being central to the life of Blackwood and how all members of the Blackwood community should conduct themselves.

Respect for yourself and others, being kind and learning our Blackwood rules

Caring for others in our classroom setting, Blackwood and the wider community

Sharing with others, taking turns and working with others

Individuality being the best you can and doing the best you can.

Engagement and Wellbeing strategies

Students behave positively when they know: what is expected of them, when they feel safe, and that people care about them and their learning. Great teachers and great teaching make a significant difference to how students behave and learn. Positive behaviour doesn't just happen. Students need to know what is expected of them and what positive behaviour looks like.

Blackwood has a range of strategies to promote engagement, positive behaviour and respectful relationships for all students. *See Welfare Policies and Procedures Manual, 2016*

- **School-wide Positive Behaviour Support.** An evidence-based approach to teaching and managing student behaviour. This tiered approach to teaching behaviour explicitly teaches students how to behave appropriately across all aspects of their school day.
- **Individual reward system.** Personalised to students when required.
- **Event Celebrations.** Blackwood programs provide an opportunity to publicly celebrate the achievements of our students.
- **Trauma.** Staff working with students who exhibit behaviours as a result of childhood trauma have access to training.

Whole School

At Blackwood we use a variety of strategies to guide us in supporting student wellbeing and engagement.

At Frankston SDS we:

- set high and consistent expectations for all staff, students and families
- prioritise positive relationships between staff and students through our School-wide Positive Behaviour Support approach to developing positive behaviour
- deliver an individualised and targeted learning program in alignment with the Victorian Curriculum
- provide individual learning plans in three priority areas: communication, independence and social competencies
- provide opportunities for students to succeed in their learning through the use of targeted communication tools: Picture Exchange Communication
- monitor student attendance and implement attendance and address on a case by case basis
- provide student voice through program discussions and reviews

Individual

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

- Student Support Groups
- Individual Learning Plan
- Behaviour Support Plan

3. Identifying students in need of support

Blackwood is committed to providing the necessary support to ensure our students are supported intellectually, emotionally and socially. Blackwood teaching staff play a significant role in developing and implementing strategies to help identify students in need of support. Blackwood 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 via visiting staff and while the student is engaged at Blackwood
- observations by school staff such as changes in engagement, behaviour, self-care, social connectedness and motivation
- communication with families
- this policy also includes our commitment to upholding the standards under our Child Safe obligations.

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

5. Student behavioural expectations

Removal from Blackwood Programs are measures of last resort and may only be used in particular situations consistent with Department policy.

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

6. Engaging with visiting staff and families

We work hard to create successful partnerships with visiting staff and families by:

- ensuring that all visiting staff and parents have access to our school policies and procedures, via our school website
- maintaining an open, respectful line of communication between visiting staff, parents and staff
- providing parent volunteer opportunities so that families can contribute to school activities
- inviting families to celebration events

7. Evaluation

Blackwood 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:

- positive behaviour data through observation and open discussion with visiting staff

REVIEW CYCLE

This policy was last updated July 2020 and is scheduled for review in July 2021