Student Engagement Policy 2010
Cobram Special School
5147

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Endorsement by School Council</th>
<th>Insertion of a tick (✔) in the next column indicates that the School Principal, as Executive Officer of the School Council, verifies that this Annual Implementation Plan was endorsed at a meeting of School Council.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
Student Engagement Policy

Providing positive learning experiences which allow students to achieve their optimum level of academic, social, emotional and physical independence

Rationale

The Department of Education and Training (DET) is committed to providing safe, secure and high quality learning and development opportunities for every student in all Victorian schools. Students can only reach their full educational potential when they are happy, healthy and safe, and when there is a positive school culture that is fair and respectful to engage and support their learn
Purpose

To relate to and be consistent with the Effective Schools are Engaging Schools: Student Engagement Policy Guidelines By -

- the encouragement of educational achievement and excellence, prevention of absences and inappropriate behaviour

- fostering a healthy school culture in which high levels of achievement take place through engagement within a positive social environment

- providing students with a safe learning environment where the risk of harm is minimized and students feel physically safe and emotionally connected

- providing 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

- maximising student learning opportunities and performance through engagement

- providing genuine opportunities for student/parent(s)/carer(s) participation and student/parent voice

- building a school culture based on positive behaviours and values

- providing cognitive, behavioural and emotional prevention and intervention for those students at risk of falling behind in their learning

- empowering students to take ownership of their growth and development and building of school pride

- promoting school engagement and inclusivity
SCHOOL PROFILE STATEMENT

Cobram and District Specialist School lies in the southern part of the main township. The building is set in a garden courtyard and playground, which has recently been extended. Functional and attractive new equipment has been added. The school has a sensory garden and basketball court. It joins with Cobram Primary School grounds allowing students to utilise their oval and other facilities. There are 28 students with a range of physical and/or intellectual disabilities, including autism and various syndromes which affect their ability to learn.

Programs cater for all children and are based on Individual Learning Plans (ILP’s) structured around adapted curriculum focused on the Victorian Essential Learning Standards (VELS). These plans are developed and monitored throughout the year by the classroom teachers.

Students come from the surrounding rural area and travel on school bus runs that cover a wide area including Yarrawonga, Tungamah, Strathmerton and Cobram. Enrolments are increasing as parents of students with a disability become more aware of the school and its programs.

The school has 18 staff members, the Principal holding the only designated leadership position. There are five fulltime teachers, one part-time teacher, 10 education support staff and one office staff. The school also engages a visiting occupational therapist, speech therapist, physiotherapist and Department social worker and Psychology Support Staff. Educational Support staff provide support to individual students and class groups as a whole and their work is highly valued in the school. The school promotes the development of self-esteem, tolerance, self-motivation and self-discipline within the students as well as striving to provide a foundation of skills, knowledge and attitudes which will maximise their independence later in life.

We have a close connection with the other special schools in the Hume Region being Shepparton, Seymour, Wodonga and Wangaratta.

Results from the Staff, Student and Parent Opinion survey indicate the school community is happy with the school. We are plotted on the graph well above the state mean in most of the areas in the survey.
WHOLE SCHOOL PREVENTATIVE STATEMENT

Cobram Special School aims to provide positive learning experiences which allow students to achieve their optimum level of academic, social, emotional and physical independence.

Cobram Special School community values are:

- Safety. Respect and Try Your Best

Individual Learning Plans focus on student learning, the development of social competence and increased independence.

Other supportive programs incorporated into the classrooms include:

- Whole school behaviour management program consisting of rewards for positive behaviour and setting out clear consequences for inappropriate behaviour both in the yard and in the classroom.
- Individual behaviour support plans
- Weekly Positive Behaviour Support, yard, bus and class awards (Respect, Safety & Try Your Best)
- Implementation of whole school behaviour support program
- Modified student program
- “Go For Your Life” school program.
- Health and Human Relationships (drug and sex education)
- Bluearth (promoting working as a team and resilience)
- Vocational program (work experience and safe at work program)
- Duke of Edinburgh and Compass awards
- Shared resources with other schools within the cluster

The school has four staff on duty during the recess and lunch breaks to ensure the support and safety of all our students with varying abilities, in such a small environment.

A multipurpose room allows for outside programs to run on wet days.

The school has access to Departmental Support Staff who are involved in supporting the staff with the development of behaviour strategies for whole classes as well as individual students.
Cobram and District Specialist School IS A PBIS School (Positive Behaviours in School)

As part of this approach there are clearly stated and visible expectations that are specifically taught, modelled and actively rewarded at a Whole School and also at a classroom level.

We have three whole school expectations, which are systemically taught and implemented according to the individual students understanding.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Whole school</th>
<th>Classroom</th>
<th>Walkways</th>
<th>Playgrounds</th>
<th>Basketball courts</th>
<th>Community</th>
<th>Bus</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RESPECT</td>
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<tr>
<td>Follow instruction</td>
<td>Use your manners</td>
<td>Accept differences</td>
<td>Wear uniform</td>
<td>Help / include others</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Raise your hand to speak</td>
<td>Give 2 arm’s length personal space</td>
<td>Quiet voice outside rooms</td>
<td>Look after each other</td>
<td>Share &amp; use equipment appropriately</td>
<td>Look after equipment</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Play nicely</td>
<td>Share equipment</td>
<td>Take turns / wait your turn</td>
<td>Speak nicely to others</td>
<td>Keep it together</td>
<td>Use manners and follow venue rules</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wait your turn</td>
<td>Follow instructions from adults</td>
<td>Use nice words and manners</td>
<td>Give others personal space</td>
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<tr>
<td>Whole school</td>
<td>Classroom</td>
<td>Walkways</td>
<td>Playgrounds</td>
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<td>Bus</td>
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<td><strong>SAFETY</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Get along with others</td>
<td>Look after equipment</td>
<td>Be sun smart</td>
<td>Use equipment properly</td>
<td>Stay on footpath and proper walkways</td>
<td>Stay in your seat</td>
<td>Keep in your seat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use equipment properly</td>
<td>Walk when inside</td>
<td>Be aware of others</td>
<td>Follow instructions</td>
<td>Keep your hands and feet to yourself</td>
<td>Keep your hands and feet to yourself</td>
<td>Keep your hands and feet to yourself</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Put rubbish in the bin</td>
<td>Make room for others</td>
<td>Make room for others</td>
<td>Follow rules</td>
<td>Follow rules</td>
<td>Keep windows shut</td>
<td>Let the driver concentrate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keep your work area tidy</td>
<td>Walk carefully</td>
<td>Walk carefully</td>
<td>Keep hands and feet to self</td>
<td>Keep hands and feet to self</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>TRY YOUR BEST</strong></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Practise school values / rules</td>
<td>Have a go</td>
<td>Talk terrific</td>
<td>Try your best to resolve problems</td>
<td>Make good choices</td>
<td>Be a role model</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Be ready to learn</td>
<td>Be organised</td>
<td>Encouraging language</td>
<td>Join in activities</td>
<td>Make good choices</td>
<td>Make good choices</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ask questions</td>
<td>Stay on task</td>
<td>Try new games / give it a go</td>
<td>Behave in a positive way</td>
<td>Use your manners</td>
<td>Use your manners</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communicate</td>
<td>Keep trying &amp; practicing</td>
<td>Encourage one another</td>
<td>Be a good friend</td>
<td>Be a good friend</td>
<td>Be a good friend</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Guiding Principles

Every member of the school community has the right to fully participate in an educational environment that is safe, supportive and inclusive. Everyone is entitled to be treated with respect and dignity.

Equal Opportunity and the Charter of Human Rights

Our policy is greatly influenced by the, ‘Equal Opportunity Act 1995’ and the ‘Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006’. They set out the grounds of discrimination that are unlawful and aim to promote freedom, dignity and equality for all.

Specifically these acts work towards creating a community in which there is:

- Recognition and acceptance of the equality of men and women
- Equality of people of all races, regardless of their religious or political convictions, their impairments or their age
- The right to privacy and reputation
- The right to freedom of thought, conscience, religion and belief
- Cultural rights
- Valuing of difference.

All DEECD employees must act in accordance with these acts and give proper consideration to human rights when making decisions.


Students with Disabilities

The Disability Standards for Education 2005 clarify the obligations of schools and the rights of students as stated in the Disability Discrimination Act 1992. The standards cover enrolment, participation, curriculum development, student support services, and harassment and victimisation.

In determining whether an adjustment to the educational provision for any individual student with a disability 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.

* Refer to link: the ‘Equal Opportunity Act 1995’
- **Bullying and Harassment**

A person is bullied when they are intentionally exposed regularly and over time to negative or harmful actions by one or more other people. Bullies are people who deliberately set out to intimidate, exclude, threaten and/or hurt others repeatedly. Bullying is a clear form of harassment.

Cobram and District Specialist School provides a positive culture where bullying is not accepted. All will have the right of respect from others, the right to learn or teach and the right to feel safe and secure in their school environment. The school provides programs that promote resilience, life and social skills, assertiveness, conflict resolution and problem solving.

Those individuals who are identified as displaying bullying behaviour receive positive counselling by the teacher or Principal, aimed at improving behaviour. Goals and strategies will be put in place to assist students to meet their needs without bullying others.

Victim reports will be taken seriously. Students will receive social skills education through classroom programs which will provide them with strategies to help them deal with bullying behaviour.

*Refer: Bullying and Harassment policy.*

**Cyber Bullying**

Cyberbullying, sexual predation, identity theft and accessing and sending inappropriate images and content are some of the real cyber safety risks facing young people today.

To reduce our students’ exposure to these risks, and to help the whole school community embrace the benefits of technology, our school has registered to take part in eSmart.

Embracing technologies is a very positive aspect of our school community. Interactions between students via mobile phone, ipod, other mobile devices and websites are an everyday occurrence for most students. While most of these interactions are positive, there are increasing reports that these technologies are being used to harass and intimidate others – cyber bullying.

Staff and students have the responsibility to ensure they are not involved in cyber bullying and do not breach the privacy of the school community.

*Refer: eSmart policy*

**Attendance**

Regular school attendance enables students to maximise their full potential and to actively participate and engage in their learning. It is important that children develop habits of regular attendance at an early age. Students who are regularly absent from school are at risk of missing out on fundamental aspects of their educational and social development.
**RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

Students, Parents and teachers all have rights and responsibilities at Cobram Special School. The Student Engagement Policy is based on the following principles:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rights</th>
<th>Responsibilities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Students</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- All students are to be valued and treated with respect.</td>
<td>- keep themselves and others safe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Students have the right to work, learn and play in a secure environment where they are able to develop their talents, interests and ambitions without interference.</td>
<td>- care for themselves, other students, staff and school property</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- behave in socially acceptable ways, both within and outside school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- know the school rules</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Staff</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- All staff are to be valued and treated with respect.</td>
<td>- create a learning environment that is engaging and interesting for all students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Teachers have the right to teach in an atmosphere of order and cooperation.</td>
<td>- be understanding, fair and consistent</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- promote and model positive behaviour and give attention to positive behaviour</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- to work together with the student’s family to develop an appropriate individual learning plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- create a learning environment that is engaging and interesting for all students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- implement individual behaviour support plans as deemed necessary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Principal and Staff have an obligation to implement the Student Engagement Policy fairly, reasonably and consistently.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Parents

- Parents 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 have an obligation to support the Principal and Staff in their efforts to maintain a productive teaching and learning environment.
- Ensure their child attends school
- Support the school's Engagement Policy
- Keep the school informed of any changes to a student's individual circumstance which may affect their education or wellbeing.

SHARED EXPECTATIONS

Staff

Cobram Special school staff is expected to provide an educational environment that ensures all students are valued and cared for, feel part of the school and can engage effectively in their learning and experience success.

This is achieved by:

- Developing an Individual Learning Plan for every child in the school
- Providing an engaging and challenging program
- Display positive behaviour
- Fostering relationships with the community
- Building a culture around the school's values
- Providing student services
- Valuing parent input into their child's learning

Students

Students are expected to:

- Attend regularly
- Participate in all school programs
- Display positive behaviour
- Respect the rights of others including teachers and parents
- Respect and value school resources
- Contribute to the development of school rules and support them
Parents

Parents are expected to:

- Ensure their children are attending school
- Cooperate with requests from the school
- Communicating regularly with the school regarding their child’s learning and wellbeing
- Support the school in maintaining a safe and respectful learning environment for all students
- Treat staff and students with respect.

Principal

The Principal is expected to:

- Provide leadership to staff and students
- Ensure staff, students and the wider school community understands their expectations
- Ensure staff and students have the resources and equipment to assist them in the process of teaching and learning
- Encourages the participation of parents

ACTIONS AND CONSEQUENCES

A positive school environment needs to be supported by consistent and shared expectations. Positive behaviours are most effectively supported through relationship-based whole-school classroom practices.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Expectations</th>
<th>Behaviours exhibited at each level</th>
<th>Consequences of Behaviour</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Respect</td>
<td>The student demonstrates:</td>
<td>• Awards and achievement certificates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Safety</td>
<td>• Respect and</td>
<td>• Participation in all School activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Try Your Best</td>
<td>• Consideration of others</td>
<td>Including camps Excursions and classroom rewards</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Excellent attendance</td>
<td>• Represents the school positively within the community</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Consistent effort</td>
<td>• Positive feelings such as happiness</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Pride in our school environment</td>
<td>• Student of the week award</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Yard award</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Bus award</td>
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<tr>
<td>Level</td>
<td>Levels of Student Behaviour</td>
<td>Behaviours Exhibited at each Level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------</td>
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<td>-----------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>The student sometimes:</td>
<td>The students sometimes:</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Shows minor disruptive behaviours in the classroom or yard</td>
<td>• Makes unacceptable noise in the classroom</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Is cooperative</td>
<td>• Disrupts learning/play of others</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Is disrespectful</td>
<td>• Demonstrates uncooperative behaviour</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Has been involved in unintentional harm to others</td>
<td>• Engages in unsafe play</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Unintentionally hurts others due to careless behaviour</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Includes Level 2 behaviour</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Demonstrates Level 1 behaviour</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>The student continually:</td>
<td>The student:</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Breaches Level 1 behaviour patterns or exhibits Level 2 behaviour</td>
<td>• Demonstrates Level 1 behaviour</td>
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<td>• Regularly disrupts/harms other students</td>
<td>• Disrupts, is rude or insolent</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Infringes upon the rights of others</td>
<td>• Shows poor attitude</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Refuses to follow instructions</td>
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<td>• Behaves in a manner that infringes upon the rights of others</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>• Leaves the classroom without permission</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Swears</td>
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<td>• Restorative chat</td>
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<td>• Time Out at lunchtime with reflection sheet.</td>
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<td>• After 3 timeouts in a week, removal of the privilege to participate in preferred activities such as swimming metal work etc.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Parent contacted and informed of removal from preferred activity.</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>The student:</td>
<td>The student:</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Continues to breach Level 2 behaviour or exhibits Level 3 behaviour.</td>
<td>• Consistently fails to improve behaviour at Level 2</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Demonstrates behaviour which may endanger the health of staff or other students</td>
<td>• Continues to ignore the rights of others</td>
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<td>• Demonstrates serious or dangerous violation of the code of conduct</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>• Fights – physically or verbally</td>
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<td>• Deliberately hurts children and damages school property</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Bullying, including cyber bullying.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The student:</td>
<td>The student:</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Behaviour is totally unacceptable and is making no effort to improve.</td>
<td>Fails to adjust behaviour patterns displayed at Level 3</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td>Continues to ignore the rights of others to an extent which seriously interrupts the education of others and/or wellbeing of others</td>
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</table>

At no stage is corporal punishment an acceptable consequence for any student.

**Discipline procedures – external suspension and/or expulsion**

Inappropriate behaviours, including irregular attendance, will be responded to through a staged response including early intervention/prevention and disciplinary consequences.

Prevention and early intervention may include:

- Understanding and catering for individual student physical, communication, sensory and emotional needs
- Structuring the environment to minimise anxiety and aid understanding, and support learning
- Utilising Support from Network SSSO expertise
- Utilising a Multi-disciplinary approach which includes support from allied Health practitioners
- Utilising the support of visiting teacher service
- Providing clear expectations of students
- Providing consistent school and classroom environments
- Scaffolding student learning programs
- Providing individual, classroom and whole school positive reinforcement systems
- Pre correction – reminder of the expected behaviour
- Developing Behaviour Support plans for individual students requiring additional support and intervention

- Providing broader education programs, for example experiential learning, work education, camps/outdoor education and/or creative arts
- Individualised, flexible learning programs or attendance schedules
- Frequent communications between teachers and parents/carers via the telephone or student communication books
Consequences following student failure to comply with the school rules/classroom expectations may include:

- a verbal warning
- student counselling or participation in special focus group programs
- involving community support agencies
- supported play/special programs during break time
- referral to the Principal
- parent/carer contact initiated by the Principal
- referral to student wellbeing team staff members and/or outside agencies
- Student Support Group Meeting
- external suspension - the maximum duration of an external suspension is 5 days
- Expulsion – last resort.

**Links and Appendices**

|-------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|