VICTORIAN SCHOOL OF LANGUAGES

STUDENT WELLBEING AND ENGAGEMENT POLICY

Help for non-English speakers
If you need help to understand the information in this policy please contact the Victorian School of Languages (03) 9474 0500.

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

The Victorian School of Languages (VSL) 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, where student participation is encouraged and valued, 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 and philosophy.

SCOPE

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

CONTENTS

1. School profile
2. School values, philosophy and vision
3. Wellbeing and Engagement strategies
4. Identifying students in need of support
5. Student rights and responsibilities
6. Student behavioural expectations and management
7. Engaging with families
8. Evaluation

POLICY

1. School Profile

The Victorian School of Languages (VSL) is a government school dedicated to providing exceptional language programs for students in Foundation to 12 who do not have access to these languages at their mainstream schools. We deliver our programs through face-to-face

instruction at centres across Victoria, and virtually from Head Office. The virtual programs include the Distance Education for Secondary levels and the blended learning program, a modality to respond to rural or remote school that would not be able to have a language program otherwise. The VSL also teaches English as an Additional Language to students in rural and isolated schools via the Virtual New Arrivals Program.

Operating in alignment with government policies and priorities, the VSL plays a key role in helping the Victorian education system achieve its language participation targets.

Our diverse student body includes individuals from all three school sectors—Government, Catholic, and Independent—as well as International Students. The VSL is the largest single VCE language provider, serving over 3,500 VCE students, and for many less common languages, we are the sole provider up to the VCE level.

The VSL is guided by a School Council, which meets monthly and offers broad leadership. This council includes representatives from the Ethnic Communities Council, Independent and Catholic Schools, and the Tertiary Sector.

Administrative and curriculum services are coordinated from our Head Office, where the Executive Principal and Assistant Principals are based. The senior administration includes the Principal Class and Area Managers (Leading Teachers). Our Distance Education section, which employs both full-time and casual staff, is also located at Head Office.

Typically, the VSL provides language classes that correspond to the student's current level in their regular school. However, due to varying student numbers, some classes may be multi-level, particularly for less common languages. To address these needs, we have developed specialised curriculum materials and offer professional development for our teachers.

Students can study most languages from primary level through to VCE, ensuring a continuous and comprehensive language education.

2. School values, philosophy and vision

The vision statement:

The Victorian School of Languages will:

- provide an educational environment which challenges students and encourages excellence in language teaching and learning
- be a leader in the development of online provision
- encourage positive community values and promote positive values of multiculturalism
- work collaboratively with officers of the various sections of the Department of Education, VCAA and interstate Government language schools to develop and share curriculum and administrative resources
- promote the benefits of language study to students and the wider school community.
- empower students to achieve their personal best

Values statement

At the VSL we respect ourselves, our school and one another, and understand that our attitudes and behaviours have an impact on the people around us.

The VSL's values are:

- A respect for languages as a way to increase lifelong opportunities for learners
- A commitment to students from all communities and socio-economic backgrounds to study a language of their choice
- A strong sense of community and teamwork which embraces diversity as a strength
- A commitment to students from country, regional and metropolitan areas to have increased access to languages subject choice
- A commitment to encourage the development of individual student resilience, self-confidence and a sense of personal efficacy and identity.

Our Philosophy:

The VSL's philosophy is to provide an educational environment which challenges and extends individual students and encourages excellence in teaching and learning in the area of languages study. It will endeavour to reflect positive community values, promote inclusiveness, celebrate cultural diversity and ensure a safe environment for students.

Our *Statement of Values and School Philosophy* is available online at: https://web.vsl.vic.edu.au/policies/

3. Wellbeing and Engagement strategies

The VSL has developed a range of strategies to promote engagement, an inclusive and safe environment, positive behaviour and respectful relationships for all students in our school. We acknowledge that some students may need extra educational support at school, and that the needs of students will change over time as they grow and learn. The VSL's goal is to work with the student's home school to support students who have special needs.

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

Universal

Our whole school strategies to promote positive behaviour and inclusion are:

- maintaining high and consistent expectations of all staff, students and parents and carers
- prioritising 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 (e.g. through language celebrations, harmony day)
- 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, Student Opinion Survey and VCE data
- delivering a broad curriculum including the Victorian Curriculum, EAL, VCE and VCE VET to ensure that students are able to choose subjects and programs that are tailored to their interests, strengths and aspirations
- teachers using the Victorian Teaching and Learning Model (VTLM 2.0) instructional framework to ensure an explicit, common and shared model of instruction ensures that evidenced-based, high yield teaching practices are incorporated into all lessons

- teachers adopting 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 & School Philosophy* are incorporated into our Strategic Plan and curriculum key goals and targets and promoted to students, staff and parents so that they are shared and celebrated as the foundation of our school community
- positive behaviour and student achievement are acknowledged in the classroom and communicated to parents via reports and certificates of achievements and excellence
- monitoring student attendance and implementing attendance improvement strategies at a whole-school, area and individual level
- encouraging students to speak with their teachers, Supervisors or Child Safety Coordinator whenever they have any questions or concerns
- creating opportunities for cross-age connections amongst students through school concerts, multilevel classes, cross-class activities, peer assessment and excursions
- welcoming all students to self-refer to the Child Safe Coordinator, Centre Supervisor or Area Manager if they would like to discuss a particular issue or feel as though they may need support of any kind
- engaging in school wide positive behaviour support with our staff and students through our Respectful Relationships program
- celebrating our diverse cultures through a range of student performances and concerts and special events
- putting measures 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

Targeted

Our targeted strategies to address particular groups of students or concerns in certain age groups or friendship circles include:

- having a Leading Teacher (Area Manager) responsible for an area (generally 3 to 4 centres) who acts as a point of contact for students who may need additional support or with health and wellbeing issues
- having three Curriculum and Inclusion Leading Teachers to support staff and students in the centres
- supporting Koorie students to engage fully in their education, in a positive learning environment that understands and appreciates the strength of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture – refer to our *Inclusion & Diversity Policy* for further information
- supporting the learning and wellbeing outcomes of students from refugee background and cultural and linguistically diverse students by providing access to the learning of their mother tongue
- providing a positive and respectful learning environment for our students who identify as LGBTIQA+ and follow the Department's policy on LGBTIQA+ Student Support
- supporting students with a disability 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 in consultation with their home schools we can make reasonable adjustments to support access to learning programs, consult with families and where

required, student support groups and individual education plans, through the work of our Curriculum and Inclusion team
- supporting students enrolled under the Department's international student program in accordance with our legal obligations and Department policy and guidelines at: International Student Program

Individual

The VSL implements a range of strategies that support and promote individual engagement. These 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 through parent/teacher/student interviews, and special meetings as required
- developing an Individual Learning Plan and/or a Behaviour Support Plan as required and in consultation with the home school if necessary
- considering if any environmental changes need to be made, for example changing the classroom set up
- consultation with parents and the home school 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 The Orange Door
    - re-engagement programs such as Navigator

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

- working together with the principal of the student's home school
- 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 attendance in collaboration with the student and their family
- engaging with our regional Koorie Education Support Officers
- running regular check-ins for all students:
    - with a disability
    - with other complex needs that require ongoing support and monitoring

Department programs and services include:

- Program for Students with Disabilities
- Mental health and wellbeing toolkit
- headspace
- Navigator
- LOOKOUT

4. Identifying students in need of support

The VSL, within the limited contact time, is committed to providing the necessary support to ensure our students are supported intellectually, emotionally and socially. The Area Managers, Curriculum and Inclusion Leaders and Centre Supervisors play a significant role in developing and implementing strategies to help identify students in need of support and enhance student wellbeing.

The VSL 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
- engagement with families
- communication with the student's home school

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 and School Philosophy Policy* 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

Students have the responsibility to:

- participate fully in their educational Language 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. 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's *Statement of Values and School Philosophy Policy / Student Code of Conduct*.

Violence, bullying, and other offensive and harmful behaviours such as racism, harassment and discrimination are not tolerated and will be managed in accordance with this policy. Bullying will be managed in accordance with our *Bullying Prevention Policy*.

When a student acts in breach of the behaviour standards of our school community, the VSL will institute a staged response, consistent with the Department's policies on behaviour, discipline and student wellbeing and engagement. Where appropriate, parents will be informed about the inappropriate behaviour and the disciplinary action taken by teachers and other school staff.

Our school considers, explores and implements positive and non-punitive interventions to support student behaviour before considering disciplinary measures such as detention, withdrawal of privileges or withdrawal from class.

Disciplinary measures may be used as part of a staged response to inappropriate behaviour 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. Disciplinary measures at our school will be applied fairly and consistently. Students will always be provided with an opportunity to be heard.

Disciplinary measures that may be applied include:

- warning a student that their behaviour is inappropriate
- teacher controlled consequences such as moving a student in a classroom or other reasonable and proportionate responses to misbehaviour
- withdrawal of privileges
- referral to the Centre Supervisor and Area Manager
- restorative practices
- detentions
- behaviour support and intervention meetings
- suspension
- expulsion

Suspension, expulsion and restrictive interventions are measures of last resort, when it may be necessary to use restrictive interventions to protect the safety of a student and members of the school community and may only be used in situations consistent with Department policy, available at:

- Suspensions Policy
- Expulsions Policy
- Restraint and 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 is responsible for ensuring all suspensions and expulsions are recorded as required by the Department of Education. A register of suspensions and expulsions will be maintained by the Principal.

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

7. Engaging with families

The VSL values the input of parents and carers, and we 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/carers have access to our school policies and procedures, available on our school website: www.vsl.vic.edu.au
- maintaining an open, respectful line of communication between parents/carers and staff
- providing parent/carer volunteer opportunities so that families can contribute to school activities
- involving families with homework and other curriculum-related activities
- involving parents in school decision making by being elected/nominated members of School Council
- coordinating resources and services from the community for families
- developing Individual Education plans for students

8. Evaluation

The VSL collects 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:

- Attitude to school survey data
- school reports
- attendance and absence data

The VSL also regularly monitors available data to ensure any wellbeing or engagement issues are acted upon in a timely manner and any intervention occurs as soon as possible.

COMMUNICATION

This policy is communicated to our school community in the following ways:

- Available publicly on our school's website www.vsl.vic.edu.au
- Included in staff induction processes
- Included as annual reference in school newsletters

Our school will also ensure it follows the mandatory parent/carer 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 policies and resources are relevant to this *Student Engagement and Wellbeing Policy*:

- Attendance
- Behaviour - Students
- Child Safe Standards
- Expulsions
- Koorie Education
- LGBTIQA+ Student Support
- Restraint and Seclusion
- Student Engagement
- Students with Disability
- Supporting Students in Out-of-Home Care
- Suspensions

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

- *Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy*
- *Bullying Prevention Policy*
- *Inclusion and Diversity Policy*
- *Statement of Values and School Philosophy*
- *Attendance Policy*
- *Complaints Policy*

POLICY REVIEW AND APPROVAL

Policy last reviewed	September 2026
Consultation: School Council	16 September 2026
Approved by:	Principal
Next Scheduled review date	2028