



# Somers School Camp



## 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 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.

Somers School Camp 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 and excursions.

### CONTENTS

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

### POLICY

1. School profile

Somers School Camp is a multi-campus (Woorabinda & Somers) residential school within the Department of Education and Training. Somers School Camp is also a member of the Residential Outdoor Schools Association. The school's educative purpose – "Experience FOR a lifetime" – is realised by outdoor learning and a residential program that focuses on personal, social, critical thinking, environmental and sustainability domains of the Victorian Curriculum.

The Somers Campus caters for 160 students over a 9-day network residential program to Year 3 to 6 students from across Victorian government schools. The Woorabinda Campus also caters for approximately 3000 students per year, by offering 3- 5 day residential programs to Year P-6 students



# Somers School Camp



mostly from individual Victorian government primary schools. Our students generally attend as a cohort of 20 to 100 students and are accompanied by Visiting Teachers from their home school

At Somers, students develop a deeper connectedness with the natural environment, learn to cope with challenges, develop team skills and leadership. We design and implement educational programs that cater for students from Prep – Year 6. These residential programs are tailored to meet individual school requirements. The programs on offer include Community and Teamwork, Resilience, Challenge and Trust and Sustainability and Indigenous Connections. At Woorabinda, students' learning is based upon interactions in the natural world. Woorabinda aims to:

- Develop in students an understanding of our relationship with the environment, others and ourselves.
- Inspire curious and adventurous learners who can transfer this knowledge, skill and disposition to actively contribute towards a sustainable world.

Our curriculum is driven by Victorian Curriculum framework. Our students engage with the curriculum through outdoor learning opportunities from an Outdoor Education perspective. This includes adventure activities, nature education activities and learning aligned with educating for sustainability.

Somers School Camp has, for many years, acknowledged high levels of student engagement through anecdotal evidence, student and visiting staff feedback and the Student Attitudes to School survey data.

## 2. School values, philosophy and vision

Somers School Camp's Statement of Values and School Philosophy is integral to the work that we do and is the foundation of our school community. Students, staff and members of our school community are encouraged to live and demonstrate our core values of respect, integrity and kindness at every opportunity.

Our school's vision is to enrich our students through the delivery of exemplary community living, environmental awareness and outdoor learning programs.

Our Statement of Values centres around Community, The Child, Learning and The Environment and is available online at: [www.somersschoolcamp.org/vision](http://www.somersschoolcamp.org/vision).

## 3. Wellbeing and Engagement strategies

Somers School Camp utilizes a range of strategies to promote engagement, positive behaviour and respectful relationships for all students in our school. We recognise the importance of student friendships and peer support in helping children and students feel safe and less isolated. We acknowledge that some students may need additional social, emotional or educational support at school, and that the needs of students will change over time as they grow and learn.

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



# Somers School Camp



## Universal

- Our school's Statement of Values, alongside the DET values, are promoted to students, staff and parents, providing consistent expectations that are shared and celebrated as the foundation of our school community
- prioritises building positive relationships between staff and students, recognising the fundamental role this plays in supporting and sustaining student health and 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
- teachers 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 and the Victorian Teaching and Learning Model (VTLM).
- teachers use DET Pedagogical Model as an instructional framework to ensure an explicit, common and shared model of instruction to ensure that evidenced-based, high yield teaching practices are incorporated into all lessons
- work closely with visiting schools to develop learning programs that are inclusive, engaging and supportive. We focus on supporting student transitions when moving between different stages of their learning and collaborating with visiting schools to support student health and wellbeing needs.
- analysing and being responsive to a range of school data such as attendance, Attitudes to School Survey, student management data and school level assessment data
- we monitor student attendance and implement attendance improvement strategies at a whole-school, cohort and individual level
- ensure students have the opportunity to contribute to and provide feedback through surveys, written documentation and debriefing sessions with Group Teachers, Campus Principals or the Principal. Students are invited to school council meetings (when attendance coincides with school council meetings) to provide feedback on school operations
- All students are welcome to self-refer to Leadership Staff, Group Teachers, Campus Principal and Principal if they would like 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
- positive behaviour and student achievement is acknowledged throughout the school. We engage in school wide positive behaviour support with our staff and students, which includes programs such as Respectful Relationships and Safe Schools.
- 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.

## Targeted

- Each Somers School Camp teacher monitors the health and wellbeing of students in their care, and acts as a point of contact for students who may need additional support
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture is supported in a positive learning environment, as identified in the Inclusion policy. Koorie students are supported to engage fully in their



# Somers School Camp



education, and where appropriate Somers will engage in the home school support networks and DET Regional Koori Education Support Officers.

- our English as a second language students are identified prior to attending Somers and supported through the visiting schools EAL program. Cultural and linguistically diverse students are supported to feel safe and included in our school including through the use of a range of support strategies.
- we support learning and wellbeing outcomes of students from refugee background
- 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 and safe schools recommendations
- all students in Out of Home Care are supported in accordance with the Department's policy on [Supporting Students in Out-of-Home Care](#).
- 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 and exposure to adversity.
- Somers Principal Class and Leadership employees and selected staff will undertake health promotion and social skills development in response to needs identified by student wellbeing data, classroom teachers or other school staff each year

## Individual:

Somers School Camp implements a range of strategies that support and promote individual engagement. These may include:

- building constructive relationships with students at risk or students who are vulnerable due to complex individual circumstances
- collaborating, where appropriate, with the support of the student and their family, with any external allied health professionals, services or agencies that are supporting the student
- meeting with a student and their teachers/aide/parent or carer to discuss how best to support the student to engage with their learning at Somers
- staff will be responsive and sensitive to changes in the student's circumstances and health and wellbeing, and if required, will attend Student Support Group meetings for all students:
  - with a disability
  - in Out of Home Care
  - with any other complex needs that may require ongoing support and monitoring
- developing and / or utilizing an Individual Learning Plan and/or a Behaviour Support Plans and Programs for Students with Disabilities
- considering if any environmental changes need to be made to support student learning, for example changing the venue or learning area
- referring the student, through their home school, 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



# Somers School Camp



## 4. Identifying students in need of support

Somers School Camp is committed to providing the necessary support to ensure our students are supported intellectually, emotionally and socially. Somers staff work with Visiting Teachers develop and implement strategies to help identify students in need of support and enhance student wellbeing. Somers School Camp will utilise the following information and tools to identify students in need of extra emotional, social or education support:

- gathering of pre-program data on individual student personal, health and learning needs
- attendance records
- academic performance
- staff observations of changes in student engagement, behaviour, self-care, social connectedness and motivation
- engagement with families
- self-referrals or referrals from peers
- collaborating with visiting school nurses, wellbeing coordinators, pastoral cares leaders, etc to identify students with additional needs

## 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.

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 have the responsibility 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. Further information about raising a complaint or concern is available in our Complaints Policy.

## 6. Student behavioural expectations and management



# Somers School Camp



Behavioural expectations of students, staff and families are grounded in our school's Statement of Values. Student bullying behaviour will be responded to consistently with Somers School Camp's Bullying policy.

When a student acts in breach of the behaviour standards of our school community, Somers School Camp 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 implement 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 Campus Principal
- engagement in restorative practices
- behaviour support and intervention meetings
- removal from program

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 and Training.

The Principal of Somers School Camp is responsible for ensuring all suspensions and expulsions are recorded on CASES21.

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

## 7. Engaging with families and home schools

Somers School Camp 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.



# Somers School Camp



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
- Encouraging families to support student learning activities and celebrating student achievement
- involving families in school decision making wherever practicable and possible
- coordinating resources and services from the community for families

## 8. Evaluation

Somers School Camp 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 survey data
- visiting teacher survey data
- program reflections and Somers teacher feedback
- incidents data
- school reports
- CASES21, including attendance and absence data

Somers School Camp will also regularly monitor available data dashboards 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 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

## FURTHER INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

The following Department of Education and Training 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](#)



# Somers School Camp



- [Behaviour - Students](#)
- [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	April 2025
Consultation	Somers School Camp School Council
Approved by	Mark Warner - Principal
Next scheduled review date	April 2026