



Student Welfare, Good Discipline and Effective Learning

Student Welfare Policy

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Student Welfare Directorate

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Introduction

The New South Wales public education system seeks to provide quality education for all students, taking account of their age, background, ability and interests. Government schools help students to become self directed, life long learners who can create a positive future for themselves and for the wider community.

For this to occur, government schools need to be places where every student can learn and grow with confidence. Students develop best in schools where teaching and learning occur in a context of student welfare.

Schools need to be safe and happy places for students and their teachers. Student welfare is enhanced when all members of the school community participate in the learning programs and life of the school.

School communities have developed their own student welfare policies and practices within the framework of the Student Welfare Policy, introduced in 1986. The policy has now been extensively revised to assist schools to build on existing good practice and to incorporate contemporary educational perspectives.

With the release of the revised Student Welfare Policy it is now timely for each school community to:

- review student welfare, including discipline
- determine key issues for action
- develop action plans relating to student welfare
- implement student welfare actions and the school discipline policy
- review student welfare within the school's ongoing planning and reporting processes.



Context

Student welfare in government schools:

- encompasses everything the school community does to meet the personal, social and learning needs of students
- creates a safe, caring school environment in which students are nurtured as they learn
- is achieved through the total school curriculum and the way it is delivered
- incorporates effective discipline
- incorporates preventive health and social skills programs
- stresses the value of collaborative early intervention when problems are identified
- provides ongoing educational services to support students
- recognises the diversity within the school community and provides programs and support which acknowledge difference and promote harmony
- recognises the role that the school plays as a resource to link families with community support services
- provides opportunities for students to:
 - enjoy success and recognition
 - make a useful contribution to the life of the school
 - derive enjoyment from their learning.

Schools provide effective learning and teaching within secure, well-managed environments, in partnership with parents* and the wider school community. The objectives and outcomes that follow therefore relate to:

Effective learning and teaching
Positive climate and good discipline
Community participation.

**Throughout this policy the term parent should be read to include caregiver.*

Effective learning and teaching

Objective

To enhance effective learning and teaching by:

- encouraging students to take responsibility for their own learning and behaviour
- identifying and catering for the individual learning needs of students
- establishing well-managed teaching and learning environments
- ensuring that learning activities build on prior knowledge and experiences and are socially and culturally relevant
- providing frequent opportunities for students and their parents to discuss learning programs and student behaviour and progress
- identifying key social skills and developing plans for all students to acquire them, or make progress towards them, over time
- ensuring that gender and equity issues are recognised and addressed across the curriculum.

Outcomes

- Students will be active participants in the learning process.
- Coordinated student services will provide effective support to classroom programs.
- The learning experiences of students will affirm their individuality and be positive and satisfying.

Results for students

- Students will participate in decisions about their own learning.
- Students will pursue a program of learning relevant to their needs and aspirations.
- Students will develop an understanding of themselves as well as skills for positive, socially responsible participation.
- Students will develop competencies which enhance the quality of their relationships with others.
- Students will feel valued as learners.



Positive climate and good discipline

Objective

To enhance school climate and discipline by:

- maximising student participation in decision making and ensuring that principles of equity and fairness are reflected in school practice
- providing opportunities for students to demonstrate success in a wide range of activities
- developing and implementing policies and procedures to protect the rights, safety and health of all school community members
- establishing clear school rules which are known and understood by all school community members
- monitoring attendance and ensuring that students attend school regularly
- valuing and providing opportunities for all students to develop the skills involved in positive relationships, social responsibility, problem solving and dispute resolution
- valuing difference and discouraging narrow and limiting gender stereotypes
- incorporating students' views into planning related to school climate and organisation
- establishing networks to support students and making sure that students and parents know about, and have ready access to, this support
- recognising the relationship between student and staff welfare and ensuring that staff welfare is also a priority
- providing resources and opportunities for students to gain leadership experience using a range of mechanisms, including student representative councils or school parliaments.



Outcomes

- The well-being, safety and health of students and other community members will be priorities in all school policies, programs and practices.
- Principles of equity and justice will be evident in school plans, programs and procedures.
- The discipline code of the school will provide clear guidelines for behaviour which are known by staff, students and parents who have contributed to their development.
- The school will be a disciplined, ordered and cohesive community where individuals take responsibility and work together.
- The school will reflect the values of its community and will welcome the participation of community members in the life of the school.
- The school will be an inclusive environment which affirms diversity and respects difference.

Results for students

- Students will be safe in the school environment.
- Students will know what is expected of them and of others in the school community.
- Students will be able to learn without disruption from unruly behaviour.
- Students will be provided with appropriate support programs.
- Students will contribute to decision making in the school.
- Students will participate in all aspects of school life as equals.
- Students will value difference.
- Students will be respected and supported in all aspects of their schooling.
- Students will know and understand their school's organisation and know about student representative councils and other representative bodies such as the School Council.



Community participation

Objective

To enhance community participation by:

- building learning communities in which staff, students and parents work together for planned results
- encouraging parents and community members to participate actively in the education of young people and in the life of the school
- acknowledging parents as partners in school education
- encouraging students to have a sense of belonging to the school community
- assisting families to gain access to support services in the community
- fostering close links with the wider community
- encouraging links between parent and student representative groups
- inviting parents to share their skills and experiences in the school community
- supporting students and their parents in making decisions about learning programs
- recognising students' families, cultures, languages and life experiences.

Outcomes

- There will be strong links between students, staff, parents and other members of the school community.
- Parents and community members will participate in the education of young people and share the responsibility for shaping appropriate student behaviour.
- The curriculum, goals, plans and actions of the school will reflect the needs and aspirations of students and the wider school community.
- Students, parents and teachers will perceive that the learning and teaching programs in the school are relevant and beneficial.
- Staff will facilitate parent and community involvement in a range of school activities.

Results for students

- Students will be supported by parent and community participation in school activities.
- Students will value the school as an integral part of the community.
- Students and their families will know how to gain access to relevant support services in the community.
- Students will be partners with parents and teachers in the teaching and learning processes at the school.



Responsibilities

Schools

Principals will ensure that:

- a commitment to student welfare underpins all the policies and activities of the school
- the school community reviews policies and practices related to student welfare
- student welfare is regularly reviewed using appropriate planning processes
- a school discipline policy is developed and regularly reviewed
- the review processes take into account other mandatory policies
- strategic issues identified in reviews are incorporated into the school plan
- students, staff and parents are assisted to develop strategies for addressing student welfare and discipline needs in all the activities of the school
- other policies and practices in the school are regularly reviewed to ensure that they meet the needs of all students in the school.

Teaching and support staff, according to their role in the school, will:

- ensure that they are familiar with the Student Welfare Policy and the School Discipline Policy
- contribute to the provision of a caring, well-managed, safe environment for all students, fellow staff and parents
- participate in the learning and teaching process in ways which take account of the objectives in this policy
- participate in the school community's implementation of the Student Welfare Policy.

Staff with a specific student support role will ensure that:

- the school develops effective mechanisms for integrating behaviour management, conflict resolution and support for students experiencing difficulties.

Students will be encouraged to:

- act according to the discipline code established by the school community
- contribute to the provision of a caring, safe environment for fellow students, staff and parents
- participate actively in the learning and teaching process
- provide their views on school community decisions, including reviews of student welfare, using agreed upon processes which include student representative councils and school parliaments
- practise peaceful resolution of conflict.

Parents will be encouraged to:

- participate in the learning of their children and the life of the school, including reviews of student welfare and the discipline code
- share responsibility for shaping their children's understanding about acceptable behaviour
- work with teachers to establish fair and reasonable expectations of the school.

Districts and state office

The district superintendent will ensure that:

- all staff are familiar with, and implement the Student Welfare Policy
- the implementation of this policy is supported by district office staff
- school programs support student welfare priorities and are responsive to the school community.

State office directors will ensure that:

- all staff are familiar with the Student Welfare Policy
- support generated in their directorate is consistent with this policy
- all staff consider the implications of this policy
- State Executive is provided with information on system-wide performance and policy advice in relation to student welfare.

