

# 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.

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- 3. Wellbeing and Engagement strategies
- 4. Identifying students in need of support
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- 7. VSL Student Code of Conduct
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# **POLICY**

# 1. School profile

### **Purpose**

The Victorian School of Languages (VSL) is a government school and state-wide service which provides language programs for students from Foundation to Year 12 (VCE) across all three sectors (Government, Independent, and Catholic). The school offers Languages in face-to-face and Distance Education classes to students who cannot study the language at their home school. The VSL strives to provide a nurturing and challenging environment that extends students to reach personal best in their language study. The school began in 1935 by teaching two languages and now offers over 50 languages.

#### Environmental Context

- The school has two main sections, Distance Education classes and Centre (face-to-face) classes. In addition, the school:
  - has a course development section with a focus on online development and provision
  - provides a range of professional development activities on Language's methodology, curriculum, pedagogy and technology
  - auspices VET in Schools courses in languages
  - teaches EAL via video-conferencing to students in country Victoria who cannot access an English Language Centre
- The VSL strives to maintain the viability of low candidature languages.
- The school teaches around 50 languages in over 40 Centres (campuses) across Victoria. Students come from both Government and non-Government schools. Classes are held outside school hours usually on Saturdays throughout the Melbourne metropolitan area, country and regional Victoria and some midweek classes. The VSL Centres are organised in twelve areas, each under the administration of a Leading Teacher (Area Manager) and Centre classes range from Foundation to Year 12.
- The school teaches 14 languages via distance education (Arabic, Chinese, French, German, Greek, Hindi, Indonesian, Italian, Japanese, Latin, Punjabi, Spanish and Vietnamese SL). The levels range from Year 7 to Year 12 (VCE). The teaching and learning is carried out through video-conferencing, online coursework and regular seminars and webinars.
- The VSL School Council comprises of elected and nominated members, and provides expert and broadly based guidance and leadership to the school.
- Overall staffing arrangements, curriculum, and administrative services are organised from the Head Office in Thornbury where the Principal and three Assistant Principals are based.
- The school is a state-wide provider for Languages, member of the Australian Network of Government Language Schools, the Australasian Association of Distance Education Schools, the Modern Language Teachers Association of Victoria, AFMLTA and is an associate member of the Ethnic Communities Council of Victoria.
- The school has a broad socio-economic demographic and widely diverse cultural setting.
- As the school has multiple campuses throughout Victoria, metropolitan and country, it requires high level management to achieve consistent outcomes.
- The school responds to Language needs of new and emerging communities, changing demands and demographics.
- The school faces increased demand for distance and online provision and places an increasing emphasis on Blended Learning and Information Technology.
- The largest language groups at the VSL are Punjabi, Chinese (Mandarin) and Vietnamese.

# 2. School vision, values and philosophy

# The vision statement:

The VSL aims to provide the best languages teaching service to students and schools throughout Victoria using a variety of delivery methods (e.g. Face-to-face classes, Distance Education, online teaching) and play a key role in maintaining and strengthening Australia's language heritage.

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 section of DET and interstate Government language schools to develop and share curriculum and administrative resources
- promote the benefits of language study to students and the wide school community.

### The values statement:

The values that underpin the development and delivery of the VSL's Languages provision 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

- courage, resilience and integrity to develop as a leader in a specialised field of endeavour
- a commitment to students from country, regional and metropolitan areas to have increased access to Languages
- a commitment to enhancing student well being
- a commitment to improving outcomes for every student, in every class, in every VSL Centre and in all communities

# Our Philosophy:

The VSL philosophy is to provide an education 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: www.vsl.vic.edu.au

# 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 goal is to work with students home schools 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

The whole of school strategies of VSL to promote positive behaviour and inclusion are as follows:

- high and consistent expectations of all staff, students and parents and carers
- prioritise 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 faculty/language celebrations)
- 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, Attitudes to School Survey (PoLT) and VCE data
- deliver a broad curriculum including EAL and VCE to ensure that students are able to choose subjects and programs that are tailored to their interests, strengths and aspirations
- teachers at the VSL use the explicit instructional model and H.I.T.S, such as differentiated learning to ensure an explicit, common and shared model of instruction are incorporated into lessons
- teachers at VSL 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, Victorian Curriculum F-10 (Languages) and the VCE Study designs
- 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
- transition information handbook is available to support students moving into VCE for Yrs. 9-10 students; transition exams for Yr. 10 / Yr. 11. The last 3 sessions of the year are scheduled as transition sessions for all year 11 in preparation for year 12.
- positive behaviour and student achievement is acknowledged in the classroom and communicated to parents via reports and certificates of achievements and excellence
- monitor student attendance and implement attendance improvement strategies at a whole- school, area and individual level
- students are also encouraged to speak with their teachers, Supervisors or Child Safety Coordinator whenever they have any questions or concerns
- opportunities for cross-age connections are created amongst students through school concerts, multilevel classes, cross-class activities, peer assessment and excursions
- all students are welcome 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

- we work with our Area Managers, Centre Staff and Distance Education staff to have positive behaviour across our school
- we celebrate our diverse cultures through a range of student performances and concerts and special events
- measures to identify, report and address inappropriate and harmful behaviours such as homophobia and other forms of discrimination or harassment as mentioned in VSL policies available on the website (www.vsl.vic.edu.au)

### **Targeted**

- each VSL Area has a Leading teacher (Area Manager) responsible for an VSL (generally 3 to 4 centres) and acts as a point of contact for students who may need additional support or with health and wellbeing issues
- Koorie students are supported 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
- we support 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
- we provide a positive and respectful learning environment for our students who identify as LGBTIQA+ and follow the Department's policy on *LGBTIQA+ Student Support*
- 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 <a href="Students with Disability">Students with Disability</a>, such as in consultation with their home schools we can reasonable adjustments to support access to learning programs, consult with families and where required, student support groups and individual education plans
- students enrolled under the Department's international student program are supported in accordance with our legal obligations and Department policy and guidelines at: <u>International Student Program</u>

#### Individual

Student specific strategies that may be considered and applied on a case by case basis can be found in the Department's Policy and Advisory library such as:

- Student Support Groups
- Individual Education Plans
- Behaviour Students
- Behaviour Support Plans
- <u>Student Support Services</u>

As well as other Department programs and services such as:

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

The VSL implements a range of strategies that support and promote individual engagement.

These can include:

- building constructive relationships with students at risk or students who are vulnerable due to complex individual circumstances by completing and sending "At Risk-letters"
- 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 if possible and needed
- in 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 Child First

- 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 through written and oral communication/advice
- 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, phone calls and letters
- 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

# 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 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; medical forms submitted upon enrolment (including management plan)
- attendance records / data
- 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 Centre 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 /* 16 May 2024

### Student Code of Conduct.

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

- 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 is responsible for ensuring all suspensions and expulsions are recorded as required by DET. A register of suspensions and expulsions will be maintained by the Principal. This policy is available on the school website: www.vsl.vic.edu.au

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

# 7. VSL Student Code of Conduct

# 7.1 Centres - Student Code of Conduct

The Student Code of Conduct is the Victorian School of Languages' public statement on the management of Student Behaviour. It is concerned not only with student discipline, but with the general enhancement of positive student behaviour and is consistent with government priorities and community expectations. It is recognised that the school must provide a safe, orderly and caring learning environment which maximises the opportunity of all students to strive for excellence.

The principles that underlie the Student Code of Conduct are:

• all individuals are to be valued and treated with respect

- students have a right to work in a secure environment where, without intimidation, bullying or harassment they are able to fully develop their talents, interests and ambitions
- parents have a right to expect that their children will be educated in a secure environment that encourages care, courtesy and respect for the rights of others
- teachers have a right to expect that they will be able to teach in an orderly and cooperative environment
- parents have an obligation to support the school in its efforts to maintain a positive teaching and learning environment
- Principals and staff have an obligation to fairly, reasonably and consistently implement the code of conduct

The Student Code of Behaviour provides more detail and is stated on the back of the enrolment form/online school student declaration which the student has signed. The VSL is a DET Safe School. For more information, please see the *DET Child Safe Policy* 

# Students are expected at all times to make the school a safe environment for all its users and in particular:

- Be regular and punctual in attendance.
- Bring a note if absent or seeking permission to leave school early.
- Remain in the school grounds, unless the supervisor or assistant supervisor has granted permission. Carry out instructions given by the teacher or supervisor.
- Behave in a courteous and cooperative manner. Abide by the schools internet usage policy

# **Students must not:**

- Display anti-social behaviour like fighting, stealing, harassing, bullying, using illegal substances or using bad language.
- Enter classrooms until a teacher is present.
- Bring food and drinks into the classroom.
- Use mobiles / camera phones / digital players in class or bring valuable items to school.
- Bring articles, whichmay cause injury or create problems.
- Litter, cause damage to, or climb on, property.
- Use a car in the school grounds.
- Smoke on the school premises.

### **Internet / Email Code of Practice:**

- Students understand that they may be allocated a login and a password and they will be responsible for all activity
  that occurs under their login and password. They will therefore not provide their login or password details to
  others.
- In some circumstances, such as accessing educational programs, minimal student data may be shared with third party providers.
- Students will not use the internet or networks at school to access web pages, computer files, newsgroups, chat
  groups or other materials that would be considered offensive in the judgement of the school, or infringe the
  Student Code of Conduct.
- Students will not use not use the internet to frighten, threaten, annoy or bully other people. This can be illegal.
- Students will be courteous and use appropriate language when communicating on the internet, and will report to the teachers any instances of inappropriate communication.
- Students will accept responsibility in regard to copyright protected material and plagiarism and will not download and redistribute software, games, music, graphics, videos or text unless authorised to do so by the copyright owner, and will not attempt to present somebody else's work as their own.
- Students will not reveal personal information including internet password/s to others, and will not distribute names, addresses, credit card details or telephone numbers of themselves or others via the Internet or school network unless required by the VSL to do so.

In some circumstances such as educational programs, minimal studentdata may be shared with third party providers.

### VCE Students Only

I understand that:

- 1. I will need to provide a medical certificate to explain any absence of two weeks or more.
- 2. If I miss more than 20% of my classes without permission, I may not receive credit for the unit.
- 3. I will be required to notify the VSL centre in writing if I decide to withdraw from my course.

### 7.2 Distance Education – Student Code of Conduct

Students enrolled in distance education need to agree to the following:

#### I agree to:

- Submit required work regularly
- Contact the teacher regularly for scheduled lessons
- Carry out instructions given by the teacher or Distance Ed supervisor
- Inform the teacher if sick or absent for a long period
- Abide by the school's internet usage policy

#### At Seminars:

- Remain in the venue unless permission has been granted by the teacher
- Behave in a courteous and cooperative manner
- Do not use mobiles phones or digital players during seminars or bring valuable items to seminars
- Do not bring articles which may cause injury or create problems.

### Withdrawal:

I understand the following:

I will be required to notify the VSL in writing if I decide to withdraw from the course.

# **Internet / Email Code of Practice:**

- I understand that I may be allocated a log-in and a password and I will be responsible for all activity that occurs under my log-in and password. I will therefore not provide my log-in or password details to others.
- I will not use the internet or networks at school to access web pages, computer files, newsgroups, chat groups or other materials that would be considered offensive in the judgement of the school, or infringe the Student Code of Conduct.
- Not use the internet to frighten, threaten, annoy or bully other people. This can be illegal.
- I will be courteous and use appropriate language when communicating on the internet, and will report to the teachers any instances of inappropriate communication.
- I will accept responsibility in regard to copyright protected material and plagiarism. I will not download and redistribute software, games, music, graphics, videos or text unless authorised to do so by the copyright owner, and will not attempt to present somebody else's work as my own.
- I will not reveal personal information including my internet password/s to others, and will not distribute names, addresses, credit card details or telephone numbers of myself or others via the Internet or school network unless required by the VSL to do so.

Name:

Language and Level:

Signature:

Date:

# See Appendix

- 7.2.1 Distance Education VCE Student Declaration APPENDIX A
- 7.2.2 Distance Education Student Behaviour Contract APPENDIX B

# 8. Engaging with families

The VSL 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.

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: www.vsl.vic.edu.au
- maintaining an open, respectful line of communication between parents and staff
- providing parent 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

#### 9. Evaluation

The VSL will aim to 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:

- Attitude to school survey data (PoLT)
- school reports
- attendance and absence data

The VSL will also regularly monitor 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 will be communicated to our school community in the following ways:

- Available publicly on our school's website <u>www.vsl.vic.edu.au</u>
- Included in staff induction processes
- Included as annual reference in Area newsletter
- Made available in hard copy from school administration upon request

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 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
- LGBTIQA+ Student Support
- Behaviour Students
- Suspensions
- Expulsions
- Restraint and Seclusion

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 updated	April 2024
Consultation	School Council Meeting: TBC

Approved by	Principal
Next scheduled review date	2026

# APPENDIX A

	VSL Distance Education – VCE Student Declarations lease complete all of the following declarations before commencing your coursework.
Name:	
(please	provide given name and surname)
VSL level:	
(if you are s	udying a year ahead, please ensure you provide the level you are enrolled in at VSL)
Language:	
Please note tha	t you are required to complete all three agreements below. MS Teams
- I must always i - I must not use, - I must report a	Teams for educational purposes only Interact with my teacher and class mates in a respectful way Ishare or otherwise distribute contact information contained in MS Teams In misuse of MS Teams that I observe to my teacher at VSL as soon as is possible.  In the stand and agree
VSL Student B	ehaviour Agreement
at the Victor	iour, a cooperative attitude and a serious dedication to learning are expected of all students ian School of Languages. This contract is intended to make our expectations clear to all their parents/carers.
	enrolled in the Victorian School of Languages classes, I agree to:
	urteous and cooperative manner with my teacher
•	f my fellow students at all times including at seminars
_	ility for my own learning rk set a week and contact my teacher each fortnight for an oral lesson
	s as scheduled, unless a medical certificate is provided
•	cher if I have any concerns or need to seek clarification
	y ongoing enrolment in this course is dependent upon my adhering to the above rules and

YES, I accept and agree

### **VCE Student Declaration**

I have read the Course Introduction and the Advice for VCE students (links in Course App provides relevant information and policies).

I am aware that I am expected to submit one workset each week, according to the VSL Submission Timetable, and to inform my VSL teacher if I am unable to do so.

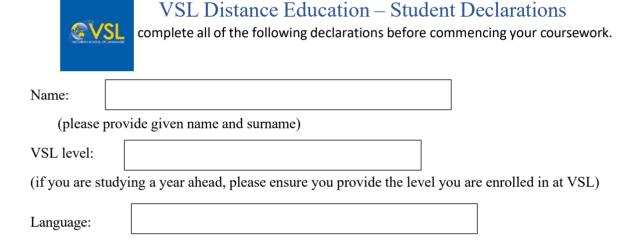
I am also aware that I must contact my VSL teacher each fortnight for scheduled oral lessons.

I understand that I must complete at least 13 Worksets and all Assessment Tasks in order to complete a VCE Unit satisfactorily.

I understand also that if I do not complete a sufficient number of Worksets, I will not be permitted to sit for the Assessment Tasks. This may lead to me being given an N for the Unit.

YES, I understand		
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### APPENDIX B



# Please note that you are required to complete both agreements below. MS Teams

I understand and agree that:

- I must use MS Teams for educational purposes only
- I must always interact with my teacher and class mates in a respectful way
- I must not use, share or otherwise distribute contact information contained in MS Teams
- I must report any misuse of MS Teams that I observe to my teacher at VSL as soon as is possible.

YES, I understand and agree
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# VSL Student Behaviour Agreement

Good behaviour, a cooperative attitude and a serious dedication to learning are expected of all students at the Victorian School of Languages. This contract is intended to make our expectations clear to all students and their parents/carers.

As a student enrolled in the Victorian School of Languages classes, I agree to:

- Behave in a courteous and cooperative manner with my teacher
- Be respectful of my fellow students at all times including at seminars

- Take responsibility for my own learning
- Submit one work set a week and contact my teacher each fortnight for an oral lesson
- Contact my teacher if I have any concerns or need to seek clarification
- I accept that my ongoing enrolment in this course is dependent upon my adhering to the above rules and conditions

YES, I accept and agree	
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