

PARTICIPANT ENGAGEMENT POLICY



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Society Profile

The German-Australian Students' Society is the association of former scholarship recipients of the SAGSE exchange.

We aim to strengthen and develop the German-Australian relationship through goodwill in action. We volunteer to assist in the running of the SAGSE exchange, whilst aiming to create further experiences for members.

GASS is a network and a family, hoping to bring people of all backgrounds with a common interest in the German language, culture, and people together.

Statement of Values

Our members are defined by our Statement of Values:

Openness to experience

We are welcoming and inclusive of all people, and have a love of learning and adventure that sees us willing to leave our comfort zone, be adaptable, and show resilience. We embrace personal growth and have a positive energy and attitude.

Passion

We strive to create positive experiences and share them with others, showing commitment to the cause, approach life with zeal, and have fun in everything we do.

Community-mindedness

We have a strong connection to the German people, language, and culture that we continually foster. We are grateful to SAGSE and GASS for the life-changing experience we received, and aim to be leaders within that community so we can continue to create these opportunities for future generations.

Professionalism

We are respectful, value teamwork highly, and strive for continuous improvement. We go about our business with integrity and commit to finishing what we start.

Engagement Strategies

The society has a range of strategies in place to promote engagement, positive behaviour and respectful relationships for all participants. We acknowledge that some participants may need extra social, emotional or educational support and that the needs of participants will change over time. Our engagement strategies include;

- High and consistent expectations of all participants.
- Promote positive relationships between organisers, committee and participants recognising the fundamental role this plays in building and sustaining wellbeing.
- Create a culture that is inclusive, engaging and supportive.
- Welcome all parents/carers and being responsive to them.

- Positive behaviour and achievement is acknowledged informally and formally in society meetings and gatherings.
- Opportunities for participants to contribute to and provide feedback on decisions about society operations through the committee meetings.
- Established engagement personnel to support participants with questions or concerns.
- Opportunities for cross—age connections amongst participants through social gatherings and peer mentoring.
- We provide a positive and respectful environment for participants who identify as LGBTIQ+.
- Participants may self-refer to the GASS president, ‘buddies’ (peer mentors), the First Year Representative, group leader or any member of the executive committee 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 participants and committee members are partners.
- Engage in society-wide positive behaviour support with our participants, which includes programs such as:
 - Pre-exchange brief event
 - Post-exchange debrief event
 - ‘Buddy system’ for peer mentoring
 - Group Leader
 - First year representative elected to committee

Participant Rights and Responsibilities

All members of our GASS community have a right to experience a safe and supportive experience. We expect that all participants, committee members, parents and carers treat each other with respect and dignity. GASS’ Statement of Values highlights the rights and responsibilities of members of our community.

GASS Action and Consequences Overview

Behavioural expectations of participants and committee are grounded in our Statement of Values.

When a participant acts in breach of the behaviour standards of our community, we will institute a staged response. Where appropriate, parents will be informed about the inappropriate behaviour and the disciplinary action taken by GASS executive committee or event organisers. We expect parents to support GASS decisions which are made based on consistent and fair practice. We believe that participants have capacity to learn from the consequences of their behaviour and set personal goals for self-improvement.

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 participants behaviour are identified and addressed. Disciplinary measures at our society will be applied fairly and consistently. Participants will always be provided with an opportunity to be heard.

When a breach of expected behaviour occurs a graded sequence of sanctions apply. As far as it is practical and when deemed necessary, parents/carers will be contacted.

Level 1 – Minor Behaviour

This level will involve the event organiser and/or the Executive Committee and participant and could involve one or more of the following:

- Discussion between participant and organiser
- Discussion with the President, or other member of the executive committee
- Moving student within the group
- Withdrawal of activity privileges

Level 2 – More Serious or Subsequent Incidents

This will involve the organisers, members of the GASS executive committee and could involve one or more of the following:

- Counselling, reinforcement of expected behaviours and standards
- Exclusion from planned activities
- Removal of privileges
- Parent/carer contact
- Conference with organisers teacher
- Close monitoring and reporting of a student's behaviour in each of their activities each day

Level 3 – Serious Incidents / Consistent Poor Behaviour

This will involve the organisers, GASS executive committee, SAGSE and GDANSE and could involve one or more of the following action:

- Parents/carers contact and student support group meeting with relevant others involved
- Suspension from current event
- Suspension from further events in exchange program - including free travel.

Suspension

Being suspended means a participant is removed from an event for a period of time.

Suspensions are a discipline measure when all other options have not worked. Suspension may be considered if a participant :

1. Behaves in such a way as to pose a danger to the health, safety or wellbeing of any person, whether actual, perceived or threatened
2. Causes significant damage or destruction of property
3. Commits theft of property, attempts to commit theft of property, or is knowingly involved in theft of property
4. Possesses illicit substances or weapons, uses illicit substances or weapons, or assists another person to use illicit substances or weapons
5. Fails to comply with any clear and reasonable instruction of a staff member, so as to pose a danger to the health, safety or wellbeing of any person, whether actual, perceived or threatened.
6. Consistently engages in behaviour that vilifies, defames, degrades, or humiliates another person based on:
 - age
 - breastfeeding
 - gender identity
 - impairment
 - industrial activity
 - lawful sexual activity
 - marital status
 - parent or carer status
 - physical features
 - political belief or activity
 - pregnancy
 - race
 - religious belief or activity
 - sex
 - sexual orientation
 - personal association (whether as a relative or otherwise) with a person who is identified by any of the above attributes
7. Consistently behaves in an unproductive manner that interferes with the wellbeing, safety or educational opportunities of any other student.

A student can be suspended if they do any of these things while:

- attending a GASS event
- travelling to or from a GASS event

Communication

This policy will be communicated to our GASS community in the following ways:

- Available publicly on the GASS website
- Included in the committee induction processes
- Provided to new participants or temporary participants (such as Host Students) upon induction.

- Made available from GASS secretary or president upon request

Review Cycle

Policy Last Reviewed:	June 2024
Approved by:	GASS Executive Committee
Approval Date:	28/06/2024
Next Scheduled review Date:	December 2026

This policy was temporarily ratified at the GASS Executive Committee via email on the 28/06/2024

This policy will be formally ratified in the next GASS Executive Committee meeting.

Chantelle Takos
GASS President