

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.

Merri Creek Primary School (MCPS) 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 in maintaining 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
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Policy:

1. School Profile

We empower students to strive for personal success as lifelong learners and to develop a sense of belonging in order to participate positively in our ever changing society. Central to MCPS's success is the value placed on community. Parents and teachers work in partnership to support each child's learning journey. We provide opportunities for students, staff and parents to contribute to areas for improvement and planning that will enhance student's learning and their social and emotional needs. A consistent whole school approach to student behaviour develops respect for others rights to learn in a safe, supportive and orderly environment.

Specialist teachers provide classroom Music, Italian, Library and Visual Art programs for all our students. Special school events include the Writers 'Festival, Arts Festival, School Musical and Rock Band Assemblies, Our Out of School Hours Care program provides high quality before and after school care in an accredited National and State framework.

2. School values, philosophy and vision

MCPS 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 C.A.R.E - creativity, acceptance and responsibility and effort at every opportunity.

Our school's vision is to create an environment where students thrive in every way. We support each other as we discover, learn, think and question.

We understand that children learn and thrive when they are happy, healthy and secure. This enables us to help them prepare to face any future challenges.

We want our students to be thinkers and creators who have positive self-esteem and a strong sense of identity. This ensures that they will value and develop respectful relationships. The ultimate goal is for them to become positive contributors to their local community and the wider world.

We work to create a secure and supportive environment where children will learn, grow and contribute. An environment where they are respected for who they are and are not discriminated against for any reason.

We understand the importance of upholding our core values as this will have a lasting impact on future learning. As a school community we will continue to respect one another and ensure that all children feel a sense of belonging. We can achieve this by knowing and valuing them as individuals and making connections with their families.

Our Statement of Values is available on the school's website.

2. Engagement Strategies

MCPS has developed a range of strategies to promote engagement, positive behaviour and respectful relationships for all students in our school. We acknowledge that some students may need extra 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 (year group specific) and individual engagement strategies used by our school is included below:

Universal

- high and consistent expectations of all staff, students and parents/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
- welcoming all parents/carers and being responsive to them as partners in learning
- analysing and being responsive to a range of school data e.g. attendance, surveys, student management data and school level assessment data
- teachers at MCPS use our instructional framework to ensure an explicit and shared model of instruction - this ensures that evidenced-based, high yield teaching practices are incorporated into all lessons
- teachers at MCPS adopt a broad range of teaching and assessment approaches to effectively respond to the diverse learning styles, strengths and needs of our students. These approaches follow standards set by the Victorian Institute of Teaching
- our school's Statement of Values are incorporated into our curriculum and promoted to students, staff and parents/carers so that they are shared and celebrated as the foundation of our school community
- carefully planned transition programs which support students moving to the next stages of school life
- positive behaviour and student achievement is acknowledged in the classroom, school assemblies and communication to parents
- students will be provided with the opportunity to contribute to and provide feedback on decisions about school operations through the class meetings, surveys and other forums. Students are also encouraged to speak with any of the teaching team whenever they have any questions or concerns.
- create opportunities for cross-age connections amongst students through the buddy program.

- all students are welcome to self-refer to the Student Wellbeing Co-ordinator (Assistant Principal), Team Leader and Principal if they need any support or wish to discuss a particular issue. We are proud to have an ‘open door’ policy where students and staff are partners in learning.
- we engage in school wide positive behaviour support with our staff and students, which includes programs such as:
 - Resilience Rights and Respectful Relationships
 - SEL(Social Emotional Learning Program) that include Social Detectives and Kimochis
 - Mindfulness practice through programs such as Cosmic Yoga/Go Noodle and Smiling Mind
 - Start Up (Term 1), Rev Up (Term 2), Keep it Up!(Term3) Move Up!(Term 4)-whole school program
- programs, incursions and excursions developed to address issue specific behaviour concerns (e.g. anger management or cyber safety)
- opportunities for student inclusion (e.g. lunchtime clubs)

Targeted

- each classroom teacher and team leader, monitor the health and wellbeing of students in their year, and act as a point of contact for students who may need additional support
- connect all Koorie students with a Koorie Engagement Support Officer
- wellbeing and health 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

- Invitation to Student Support Groups, see: <https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/student-support-groups/policy>
- Development of an Individual Learning Plan, Safety Plan and/or Behaviour Support Plan as indicated
- Program for Students with Disabilities
- Engagement, discussion, referral and working collaboratively with individual or family supports within and external to the school (see below)

MCPS 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
- meeting with students and their parent/carer to talk about how best to help the student engage with school
- developing an Individual Learning Plan and/or a Safety/Behaviour Support Plan
- considering if any environmental changes need to be made, for example changing the classroom set up
- 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 ChildFirst

Where necessary the school will support the student’s family/carers to engage by:

- 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/carers, with any external allied health professionals, services or agencies that are supporting the student
- running regular Student Support Group meetings for all students:

- with a disability
- other complex needs that require ongoing support and monitoring.

4. Identifying students in need of support

MCPS is committed to providing the necessary support to ensure our students are supported intellectually, emotionally and socially. The Wellbeing Committee plays a significant role in developing and implementing strategies to help identify students in need of support and enhance student wellbeing. MCPS 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 whilst enrolled
- attendance records
- academic progress
- observations by school staff such as changes in engagement, behaviour, self-care, social connectedness and motivation
- attendance data
- engagement with families
- self-referrals or referrals from peers

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 and parents/carers treat each other with respect and follow our school's values. MCPS has two school rights - the right to learn and the right to feel safe. Our school's Statement of Values 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, 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.
- respect the rights of others to be safe, safe environment and respect of property

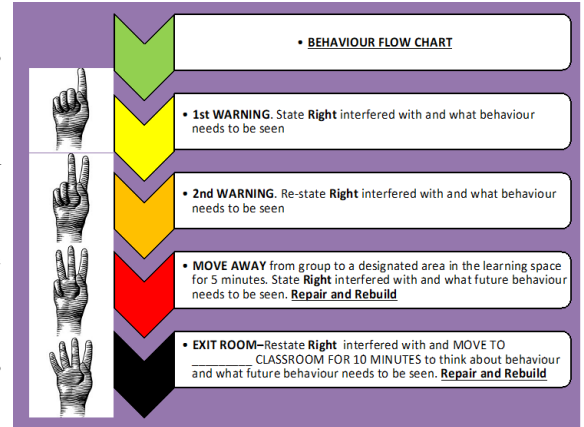
Students who may have a complaint or concern about something that has happened at school are encouraged to speak to their parents or carers and approach a trusted teacher or a member of the school leadership team.

6. Student behavioural expectations

Behavioural expectations of students, staff and families are grounded in our school's Statement of Values.

MCPS aims to support the understanding and skills of all children in communicating and developing cooperative relationships with others in a safe environment. When a student acts in breach of the behaviour standards of our school community MCPS will institute a staged response, consistent with the Department's Student Engagement Policy. Where appropriate, parents will be informed about the inappropriate behaviour and the disciplinary action taken by teachers and other school staff. Student bullying behaviour will be responded to consistently with the MCPS Bullying policy.

- MCPS uses the 5 step behaviour modification method that is displayed as a flow chart. The school's values and rights underpin the behavioural expectations of our students
- The approach is based on the Ramon Lewis“ 'Classroom Behavioural Approach”.
- It incorporates visual prompts as well as a common language that is reinforced from Foundation to Year 6.
- Teachers support students to identify the behaviour and its impact on the learning community.



- Students are encouraged to take responsibility for their choices and reflect and repair behaviours and relationships within their community.

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, proportionately 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 Team Leader/Student Wellbeing Co-ordinator
- restorative practices
- behaviour review
- Suspension and expulsion are measures of last resort and may only be used in particular situations consistent with Department policy. Available at:
 - o Student Engagement Policy: <https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/student-engagement/policy>
 - o Student Behaviour Advice: <https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/behaviour-students/policy>
 - o Suspension Policy: <https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/suspensions/policy>
 - o Expulsion Policy: <https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/expulsions/policy>
- Corporal punishment is prohibited in our school and will not be used in any circumstance.

7. Engaging with families

MCPS 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/carers by:

- ensuring that all parents/carers have access to our school policies and procedures via our school website
- maintaining an open, respectful line of communication between parents/carers and staff, supported by our Communicating with School Staff policy.
- providing parent volunteer opportunities so that families can contribute to school activities
- involving families in school decision making through committees and working groups.
- coordinating resources and services from the community for families
- including families in Student Support Groups and developing individual plans for students.

8. Evaluation

MCPS will collect data each year to understand the frequency and types of wellbeing issues that are experienced by our students. This ensures that we assess the effectiveness of our strategies and identify any emerging trends or changes that need to be made.

Sources of data that will be assessed on an annual basis include:

- student survey data
- incident data
- school reports
- parent survey
- case management
- CASES21 (Computerised Administrative Systems Environment in Schools)
- Student Online Case System (SOCS) is a system for recording, managing and reporting cases for student support services.

FURTHER INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

Related policies include Statement of Values and School Philosophy, Bullying Prevention, Child SafePolicy and Commitment to Child Safety. These can be located on the school's website.

Review Cycle:

This policy was last updated on 5th August 2020 and is scheduled for review in **August/2022**.

This policy will be reviewed in:

August 2022