MERNDA PARK 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.

Mernda Park Primary School 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 CARE values.

SCOPE

This policy applies to all school activities, including camps and excursions.

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2. School values, philosophy and vision
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SCHOOL PROFILE

Mernda Park Primary School has been constructed under the Public Private Partnership (PPP) Project. Under the PPP model, the school will be financed, designed, constructed and maintained by the private sector to high contractual standards over 25 years, allowing Principals and teachers to focus on student learning, rather than asset management.

The school, located on 40 Riverdale Boulevard in the City of Whittlesea, will commence operation in January 2017. Initial programs will cater for students in Years Foundation to Year 6.

The state-of-the-art facility provides the very best in contemporary educational design and promote active student-centred learning through the creation of adaptable, functional spaces. Our state-of-the-art buildings consist of general Learning and Teaching areas, a Resource Centre/Library, Gymnasium, music room, a community space and a large oval. Teams of educators work together to plan and teach a comprehensive Curriculum 2.0 and to provide rich learning environments for all students. Our programs are supported by contemporary resources and the latest research on teaching and learning. The school also has strong representation from a number of diverse cultures including our Koorie community. We are proud of our diversity and inclusive school community and our dedication to promoting a kind and mindful school where everyone belongs.

SCHOOL VALUES AND MISSION

Mernda Park Primary School's Statement of Values and School Mission 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.

At Mernda Park Primary School we provide our students with a safe and supportive learning environment that motivates and challenges students to achieve their full potential.

We -

- are a school with student achievement, engagement and wellbeing as its moral purpose
- are a vibrant high performing school with outstanding student outcome data
- have engaged, creative, happy and resilient students
- have a staff dedicated to high quality teaching and learning

- have consistent, relevant and documented Curriculum 2.0 reflecting best practice for the 21st century
- have well-developed and active community and parent partnerships in place.

At Mernda Park Primary School we care about each other and value Collaboration (working together), Achievement (doing our absolute best) , Responsibility (choosing right, doing right), Empathy (be kind, considerate and helpful)

WELLBEING AND ENGAGEMENT STRATEGIES

Mernda Park Primary School 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 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 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 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
- 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, parent survey data, student management data and school level assessment data
- teachers at Mernda Park Primary School use a Victorian Curriculum 2.0 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
- teachers at Mernda Park Primary School 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
- our school's Statement of Values and School Philosophy are incorporated into our Curriculum 2.0 and promoted to students, staff and parents so that they are shared and celebrated as the foundation of our school community
- carefully planned transition programs to support students moving into different stages of their schooling
- positive behaviour and student achievement is acknowledged in the classroom, and formally in school assemblies and communication to parents

- monitor student attendance and implement attendance improvement strategies at a whole-school, cohort and individual level
- students have the opportunity to contribute to and provide feedback on decisions about school operations through the Student Leadership group and Green team and other forums including year group meetings. Students are also encouraged to speak with their teachers, Learning Community Coordinator, Assistant Principal and Principal whenever they have any questions or concerns.
- create opportunities for cross—age connections amongst students through, lunch time clubs and Peer Buddies programs
- parents are welcomed and encouraged to speak to MHWC for referral to other agencies as required
- we engage in a whole school Respectful Relationships framework support with our staff and students to respectfully engage with each other
- programs, incursions and excursions developed to address issue specific needs or behaviour (i.e. Lunchtime sports club)
- opportunities for student inclusion (i.e. sports teams, clubs, recess and lunchtime activities)
- 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 The school also has strong representation from the Koorie community. We are proud of our diversity and inclusive school community.

- each Learning Community has a Coordinator, who in collaboration with all Learning Community staff monitors the health and wellbeing of students in their Learning Community, and act as a point of contact for students who may need additional support
- 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 Child safety and Wellbeing Policy for further information
- our English as a second language students are supported through our EAL Curriculum 2.0, and all cultural and linguistically diverse students are supported to feel safe and included in our school including through referrals to Collingwood Language School
- we support learning and wellbeing outcomes of students from refugee background through local support agencies and Collingwood Language School
- 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
- all students in Out of Home Care are supported in accordance with the Department's policy on Supporting Students in Out-of-Home Care including being appointed a Learning Mentor, having an Individual Learning Plan and a Student Support Group (SSG) and being referred to Student Support Services for an Educational Needs Assessment
- 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
- MHWC and Wellbeing 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
- staff will apply a trauma-informed approach to working with students who have experienced trauma
- students enrolled under the Department's international student program are supported in accordance with our legal obligations and Department policy and guidelines at: International Student Program

Individual

- *Student Support Groups*
- *Individual Education Plans*
- *Behaviour - Students*
- *Behaviour Support Plans*
- *Student Support Services*

as well as to other Department programs and services such as:

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

Mernda Park Primary School 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 student and their parent/carer to talk about how best to help the student engage with school
- developing an Individual Education Plan and/or a Behaviour Support Plan
- considering if any environmental changes need to be made, for example changing the Learning Community set up
- referring the student to:
    - school-based wellbeing supports
    - Student Support Services
    - Appropriate external supports such as services and other allied health professionals, including Orange Door, child and adolescent mental health services or Child First

Where necessary the school will support the student's family 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, with any external allied health professionals, services or agencies that are supporting the student
- monitoring individual student attendance and developing an Attendance Improvement Plans in collaboration with the student and their family
- engaging with our regional Koorie Engagement Support Officers
- running regular Student Support Group meetings for all students:
    - with a disability
    - in Out of Home Care
    - with other complex needs that require ongoing support and monitoring.

- Other resources as below
    - *Student Support Groups*
    - *Individual Education Plans*
    - *Behaviour - Students*
    - *Behaviour Support Plans*
    - *Student Support Services*

as well as to other Department programs and services such as:

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

1. Identifying students in need of support

Mernda Park Primary School is committed to providing the necessary support to ensure our students are supported intellectually, emotionally and socially. The Student Wellbeing team plays a significant role in developing and implementing strategies help identify students in need of support and enhance student wellbeing. Mernda Park Primary School 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
- attendance records

- academic performance
- observations by school staff such as changes in engagement, behaviour, self-care, social connectedness and motivation
- attendance and behaviour data
- engagement with families
- staff referrals
- transition process

2. 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 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 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 available on our website.

3. Student behavioural expectations and management

Behavioural expectations of students are grounded in our school's Statement of Values/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 Bullying Prevention Policy available on our website.

When a student acts in breach of the behaviour standards of our school community, Mernda Park Primary School 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 time out, withdrawal of privileges or withdrawal from Learning 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 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 Learning Community or other reasonable and proportionate responses to misbehaviour
- withdrawal of privileges
- referral to the Year Level Coordinator or Leadership
- restorative practices
- time out
- behaviour support and intervention meetings
- suspension
- expulsion

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 Mernda Park Primary School is responsible for ensuring all suspensions and expulsions are recorded on CASES21.

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

4. Engaging with families

Mernda Park Primary School 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
- 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
- involving families with home reading and other Curriculum 2.0-related activities
- involving families in school decision making through school council
- coordinating resources and services from the community for families
- including families in Student Support Groups and developing individual plans for students.

5. Evaluation

Mernda Park Primary School 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
- incidents data
- school reports
- parent survey
- case management
- CASES21, including attendance and absence data
- SOCS

Mernda Park Primary School 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

[Under the VRQA's Guidelines to the Minimum Standards for School Registration, schools are required to have *evidence* of how they communicate this policy to staff, students, parents, guardians and the school community. One way of producing this evidence is to include this Communication section in the policy. An alternative or additional method is to list all your school's policies in a spreadsheet and outline the communication method your school uses next to each policy. You can adapt our consolidated spreadsheet of all policies for this purpose – refer to Communicating our Policies.

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
- Included as annual reference in Principal's weekly message
- 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
- LGBTIQ Student Support

- Behaviour - Students
- Suspensions
- Expulsions
- Restraint and Seclusion

The following school policies are also relevant to this Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy are available on our website.

- Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy
- Bullying Prevention Policy
- Inclusion and Diversity Policy
- Statement of Values and School Philosophy

POLICY REVIEW AND APPROVAL

Policy last reviewed	02/12/2025
Consultation	Wider School Community – Ongoing via school website
Approved by	Mary Ryan Principal
Next scheduled review date	2 year cycle