MELTON WEST PRIMARY SCHOOL

STUDENT WELLBEING AND ENGAGEMENT POLICY

Help for non-English speakers

If you need help to understand the information in this policy please contact

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.

Melton West 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 values.

SCOPE

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

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POLICY

1. School profile

Melton West Primary School is situated in the outer metropolitan area of western Melbourne. The geographic area is part of a growing region, however the catchment area for this school has been relatively stable over the past 3 years, resulting in a steady enrolment of approximately 600 students.

- Our school's workforce composition is made up of approximately 55 EFT staff, which includes 2.6 Principal Class, 30 teachers and 30 Education Support staff.

- The school is made up of 24 classes structured into 2 mini-schools, a P-2 and 3-6, each overseen by an Assistant Principal. The classes are organised into single year levels, except for years 5 and 6 which are composite. The specialist classes on offer are science, physical education, art and L.O.T.E. (Chinese). The 3.6 Leading Teachers work intensively with all teaching staff as teaching and learning coaches.
- The student population continues to include a large proportion of students from low socio-economic backgrounds and a high number of families with a language background other than English. The population of our Aboriginal students makes up approximately 5% of our population. We continue to have a high transient population, with a significant number of students transferring in and out of the school throughout the year.
- Our continual focus is on improving student outcomes through high expectations for all, with a focus on results and in particular the growth gains for all students. All staff work in collaboration with the leadership team to achieve student outcomes across all areas. We work to ensure the curriculum is engaging and that a consistent approach in implementing the school's instructional model occurs throughout the school. We continue to work as a professional learning community where there is a focus on collaboration, results and high levels of learning for all.

2. School values, philosophy and vision

Melton West Primary School's 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 respect, honesty, teamwork, resilience, kindness and communication at every opportunity.

Communication - Kindness - Teamwork - Honesty

Resilience - Respect

Some examples of how we demonstrate our values are:
- Being adaptable and creative when solving problems
- Valuing each other's opinions
- By accepting and valuing each other's differences.
- Listening to others when they are speaking
- Taking care of our property as well as others'
- Including people in all that we do.
- Actively listening to each other's ideas

Our school's vision is to provide a safe and supportive learning environment for all students to achieve their full potential. We will do this through an engaging and inclusive curriculum, with high expectations of students as individual learners and thinkers, who become valued members of the wider community.

Our Statement of Values is available online at: https://meltonwestps.vic.edu.au/

3. Wellbeing and engagement strategies

Melton West Primary School 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, targeted and individual engagement strategies used by our school is included below:

Universal (whole School)

- high and consistent expectations of all staff, students and parents and carers
- teachers at Melton West Primary use our instructional 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 Melton West 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
- provision of an EAL teacher and school coaches ensure literacy and numeracy needs are being addressed in all classrooms across the school.
- our school's Statement of Values are incorporated into our curriculum and are promoted to students, staff and parents so that they are shared and celebrated as the foundation of our school community
- 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
- we monitor student attendance and implement attendance improvement strategies at a whole-school, cohort and individual level
- all staff are trained in the Berry Street Education Model (trauma informed teaching strategies)
- we 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
- using interpreters where appropriate to assist parents/ carers to engage in the learning and progress of their child.
- explicit teaching of the social and emotional curriculum and implementation of School Wide Positive Behaviours
- classroom agreements are developed each year
- all students develop a Ready to Learn plan
- restorative justice approach is universally used by all staff when dealing with situations
- positive behaviour and student achievement is acknowledged in the classroom, and formally in school assemblies and communication to parents
- students have the opportunity to contribute to and provide feedback on decisions about school operations through the Student Representative Council and other forums including year group meetings and Peer Support Groups. Students are also encouraged to speak with their teachers, Year Level Coordinator, Assistant Principal and Principal whenever they have any questions or concerns.
- we create opportunities for cross—age connections amongst students through athletics, and peer support programs
- all students are welcome to self-refer to the Year Group Leaders, Assistant Principal and Principal 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 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:
  - Respectful Relationships
  - Bully Stoppers
- programs, incursions and excursions are developed to address issue specific behaviour (i.e. anti – bullying programs)

Targeted (year group specific)

Each sub school has an Assistant Principal and Year level Coordinator who, alongside the Principal, monitor the health and wellbeing of students in their year, and act as a point of contact for students who may need additional support

- all Koorie students connected with (KESO) Koorie Engagement Support Officer
- all students in Out of Home Care are appointed a Learning Mentor and have an Individual Learning Plan
- Social Skills teacher provides students with additional classroom support to ensure students' personal and social learning is addressed at various stages of their primary school education
- staff apply a trauma-informed approach to working with students who have experienced trauma
- school Welfare Officer employed and makes contact with families as needed.

Individual

Melton West 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 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 Behaviour Support Plan
- considering if any environmental changes need to be made, for example changing the classroom set up
- employing Speech Therapists to conduct therapy for individual students and ensure recommendations are implemented
- employing Australian Childhood Trauma (ACT) group to provide both support and professional development for staff and therapy for individual students
- employing Education Support staff to assist in ensuring students on the Program for Students with Disabilities are receiving adequate support in and out of the classroom
- referring the student to:
    o school-based wellbeing supports such as Speech Pathologist, ACT councillors
    o Student Support Services for support and assessments
    o appropriate external supports such as council based youth and family services, other allied health professionals, headspace, child and adolescent mental health services or ChildFirst
    o referring students to Assessments Australia for cognitive and speech assessments

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
- running regular Student Support Group meetings for all students:
    o with a disability
    o in Out of Home Care
    o and with other complex needs that require ongoing support and monitoring.

4. Identifying students in need of support

Melton West 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 to help identify students in need of support and enhance student wellbeing. Melton West 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, detention and suspension data*
- *engagement with families*
- *teacher referrals*
- *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, 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.

6. Student behavioural expectations

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.

When a student acts in breach of the behaviour standards of our school community, Melton West 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 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 Year Level Coordinator*
- *Referral to the Principal class*
- *restorative practices*
- *detentions*
- *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 Melton West 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.

7. Engaging with families

Melton West 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 homework and other curriculum-related activities
- involving families in school decision making
- coordinating resources and services from the community for families
- including families in Student Support Groups, and developing individual plans for students.

8. Evaluation

Melton West 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

Melton West 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

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

- Available publicly on our school's website https://meltonwestps.vic.edu.au/our-school/#policies
- Included in staff induction processes
- Included as annual reference in school 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
- LGBTIQ Student Support
- Behaviour - Students
- Suspensions
- Expulsions
- Restraint and Seclusion

The following 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

For further information please refer to our code of conduct and student engagement booklet and school wide positive behaviours matrix.

POLICY REVIEW AND APPROVAL

Policy last reviewed	June 2023
Consultation	Approval Required
Approved by	Principal
Next scheduled review date	June 2025 mandatory review cycle for this policy is 2 years