



Mernda Primary School 0488

STUDENT ENGAGEMENT POLICY

INTRODUCTION

Definition

Student engagement can be defined as three interrelated components: behavioural, emotional and cognitive.

Behavioural engagement refers to students' participation in education, including the academic, social and extracurricular activities of the school.

Emotional engagement encompasses students' emotional reactions in the classroom and in the school and measures a students' sense of belonging or connectedness to the school.

Cognitive engagement relates to a students' investment in learning and their intrinsic motivation and self-regulation.

Rationale

The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development is committed to providing safe, secure and high quality learning and development opportunities for every student in all Victorian schools. These students can only reach their full educational potential when they are happy, healthy and safe, and when there is a positive school culture that is fair and respectful to engage and support their learning. 'Corporal Punishment' is prohibited in all Victorian schools. 'Corporal Punishment' will not be used at the school under any circumstances.

Purpose

To relate to and be consistent with the 'Effective Schools are Engaging Schools: [Student Engagement Policy Guidelines](#)', in areas such as, the encouragement of educational achievement and excellence, prevention of absences and inappropriate behaviour.

- To foster a healthy school culture in which high levels of achievement take place within a positive social environment through engagement
- To provide students with a safe learning environment where the risk of harm is minimised and students feel physically and emotionally secure
- To provide support for individual circumstances when a student begins to disengage from their learning, when regular attendance is not consistent or positive behaviours are not demonstrated
- To maximise student learning opportunities and performance through engagement
- To provide genuine opportunities for student/parent participation and student/parent voice
- To build a school environment based on positive behaviours and values
- To provide prevention (cognitive, behavioural and emotional) and intervention for all students at risk

MERNDA PRIMARY SCHOOL PROFILE STATEMENT

Mernda Primary is in a developing area in Melbourne's northern suburbs and located in the City of Whittlesea. The school was established in 1885. In 2013, the current enrolment is 630 students (which demonstrates a significant upward trend over the past three years) with 29 classrooms. It is expected to increase its current enrolment in 2014.

The school has a Student Family Occupation (SFO) density of 0.48 with the state mean being 0.49. It has a number of economically disadvantaged students with approximately 33% of our families entitled to receive Educational Maintenance Allowance. We also have a number of students who travel from the surrounding suburbs to attend.

The school is student and curriculum focussed. It strives for and encourages maximum achievement in all areas of teaching and learning and student wellbeing. Specialist programs include: Science, Physical Education, Visual Arts and Performing Arts. A variety of extra-curricular programs are offered: Choir for years 3-6, Guitar lessons, camp program and swimming programs for Prep to Year 2 and Bike Education for Year 3 -6 children. Our extension programs will be continually evaluated and developed in response to students needs.

At present, we have a Program for Students with Disabilities (PSD). A total of 6 Integration Aides support students. We run Language Support Programs which cater for the students identified as experiencing difficulty with expressive and receptive language.

The school aims for its students to develop as a 'School of Thinkers'. It pursues this objective through presenting carefully planned and targeted programs that are designed to meet the needs of all students. We provide a school-specific social skills programs which incorporates You Can Do It and Circle Time. We have focussed on monitoring student attendance and have introduced a variety of positive strategies to encourage regular student attendance such as 'It's Not Okay to Be Away'. The All Here All Week Award and Early Bird Award certificates for recognition of a full week's attendance.

The school prides itself on its safe and happy environment. Students who are living under difficult circumstances are supported by our Educational Support Officers. Parents of these students are also offered support both emotionally and financially by being directed to the most suitable agency that can accommodate their needs.

Parents are vital partners in the educational process. During the year, a number of parents have engaged in conversations about the future directions of the school. The swimming program, Prep Information evenings, excursions and special events, together with parent/teacher 3 way conferences also promote parent partnerships.

MERNDA PRIMARY SCHOOL WHOLE SCHOOL PREVENTION STATEMENT

Preventative School Culture

The positive school culture at Mernda Primary School encompasses a whole school approach which aims to support all members of the school community. Consultation with students, parents and Departmental support organisations, ensures that the school is responsive to students' social, emotional and cognitive needs.

Our school promotes a positive school culture which is predicated on student engagement being the basis for learning. To support this, the students at Mernda Primary are also involved in the decision making processes. This ranges from the formulation of classroom protocols to the whole school community. With House Captains, School Captain and Junior School Council, students are provided the opportunity to take on meaningful responsibilities and leadership roles in the coordination and implementation of whole school events (Eg Footy Day, House Sports Day) as well as improve the school atmosphere through peer support and peer mediation programs. The school will continue to build on opportunities for the students to develop their leadership skills with increased involvement in leadership programs. They also have opportunities to monitor their own learning

through self assessment, which provides them with ownership and allows them to feel safe to take educational risks in the environment they have created.

Prevention Programs

ATTENDANCE

Student absence and lateness is an ongoing concern for the school. In 2012 the average student absence rate was 16.8. The school has focused on improving the recording of approved and unapproved absences on a daily basis as well as provide information about the negative impact of absence on student learning via the school newsletter and school assemblies.

INTENSIVE LITERACY AND NUMERACY

To improve student learning outcomes and to engage students in the curriculum; explicit teaching, ongoing assessment and an authentic approach to learning is implemented. Literacy and numeracy are seen as the core curriculum areas and thus a wide range of teaching strategies are used to engage all children and further develop their skills in these areas. Classroom practice is to ensure that the curriculum is taught to recognise and respond to their diverse learning needs. Children are instructed according to their ability with focussed teaching to like ability groups in Maths, Reading and Writing. Individualised learning programs are developed for students at risk, as well as, the provision of strategically targeted intervention in Literacy with additional assistance provided with a Language Support Program.

STUDENT WELFARE AND DISCIPLINE

A whole school approach towards student welfare and discipline is being developed at Mernda Primary School. The focus of this approach is to develop a shared classroom culture to teach and acknowledge positive behaviours. Building positive relationships between teachers, students and parents is essential and reflects the school's belief that the academic achievements of students are inextricably linked to their sense of connectedness to school. Restorative Practice is the preferred approach.

STUDENT WELLBEING

Lunch time, elective and multi-aged programs are implemented across the school to enhance the behavioural and emotional engagement of the students. By participating in these programs, students are able to improve their interpersonal skills through teamwork and cooperation.

STUDENT PATHWAYS AND TRANSITION

Mernda Primary School aims to provide a smooth and efficient transition from preschool to primary school and from primary school to secondary school. The formal Prep Orientation Program provides opportunities for the local kindergarten students and their families, to become familiar with the school environment, teaching staff and simple school routines. To ensure that the students are prepared for secondary school, they also attend orientation sessions at the local secondary schools during Terms Three and Four. The school releases relevant staff to visit the local kindergartens and liaise with the secondary schools transition coordinators to obtain and share essential information about individuals' needs. To foster a smooth transition between year levels, activities are planned to encourage children to share their experiences with each other.

PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

Professional learning is given high priority at Mernda Primary School to ensure the strategies and approaches that are adopted by the whole school are implemented with integrity. Over the past two years there has been a focus on Student Engagement and Wellbeing with staff participating in an intensive professional development sessions. This incorporates collegiate planning and reflection, collegiate teaching as well as classroom observations and feedback from the Literacy and Numeracy curriculum teams. Peer observation allows for teachers to model best practice.

SUPPORTING POSITIVE BEHAVIOURS AND RELATIONSHIPS

Mernda Primary School advocates the active involvement of parents in the learning and behaviour of each student. The school encourages this cooperative approach with parents through parent-teacher student interviews in Terms One and Two, phone calls, conferences, and the use of student diaries in the senior school. The school teaches and acknowledges positive student behaviours, however when this is compromised, logical and consistent consequences are implemented in a staged response. This approach is conducted in an informal way for minor incidents and is embedded in classroom teaching and learning. Serious incidents require more formal actions. In the case of repeated inappropriate behaviour, the school will devise strategies and approaches to address the needs of individual students - behaviour plans and monitoring student behaviour daily.

RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 outlines a vision of human rights for all Victorians. The charter affirms that all people are born free and equal in dignity and rights. While the charter demands equality for all, it also emphasises the value of difference. The charter requires public authorities, including Governments schools and their employees to act compatibly with human right and to consider them when making decisions and delivering services.

All members of the school community have a right to feel safe and supported at Mernda Primary School. It is the shared responsibility of the students, teachers and parents to maintain an inclusive and positive learning environment which focuses on student engagement and improved learning outcomes. To achieve this, the consistent application of the following rights and responsibilities are maintained across the school community.

(Refer to http://www.austlii.edu.au/au/legis/vic/consol_act/cohrara2006433/ for The Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006)

All members of the Mernda Primary School community have a right to:

- Fully participate in an environment free of discriminatory behaviour
- Be treated with respect and dignity
- Feel valued, safe and supported in an environment that is inclusive

All members of the Mernda Primary School community have a responsibility to:

- Acknowledge their obligations under the Equal Opportunity Act 1995 and the Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 and communicate these obligations to all members of the school community
- Participate and contribute to a learning environment that is safe, secure and stimulating
- Ensure that their actions and views do not impact on the health and wellbeing of other members of the school community

(Refer to http://www.austlii.edu.au/au/legis/vic/consol_act/eoa1995250/ for the Equal Opportunity Act 1995)

All students have the right to:	All staff have the right to:	All parents have the right to:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feel safe and secure at school • Be treated with respect • Learn in a safe and caring environment • Be supported and encouraged by teachers • Learn and play games without being interrupted 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work in a safe and supportive school • Be treated with respect • Be supported by the school community • Be treated equally and fairly • Participate in the decision making processes of the school • Be supported by the leadership team • Receive feedback about performance • Professional development opportunities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Know that their children are in a safe and caring learning environment • Know that the individual learning needs of their children are being met • Be treated with respect • Be informed about their children’s behaviours and learning needs • Be able to express concerns and to be listened to
All students have a responsibility to:	All staff have a responsibility to:	All parents have a responsibility to:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respect the rights of others • Explore their full potential • To follow the school rules and policies: Stop, Think, Do and The 3 Steps • To demonstrate the school values 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build positive relationships with students as a basis for engagement and learning • Use and manage the resources of the school to create stimulating, safe and meaningful learning • Treat all members of the school community with respect and fairness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build positive relationships with members of the school community • Ensure students attend school on time, with the appropriate materials • Support the school by reinforcing the values, rules and expectations • To provide the school with current home, work and emergency contact telephone numbers

SHARED EXPECTATIONS

The school community has developed shared expectations for staff, students and parents, to ensure that the learning, safety and rights of all are respected. The expectations are intended to be positive and set out the anticipated and appropriate behaviours of the school community. The shared expectations are intended to support individual students and their families that come to the school community from a diverse range of cultural backgrounds, communities and experiences.

Expectations – Staff

ENGAGEMENT

The Leadership Team is expected to:

- Uphold the right of every child to receive an education
- Ensure that the school complies with its duty of care obligations to each student as well as its obligations under the Equal Opportunity and Humans Rights legislation
- Collaborate with the schools community to develop policies and procedures consistent with the schools values and the Departmental Guidelines
- Identify the diversity of the school community and deliver teaching and learning, educational and extra-curricular activities, facilities, student services and community linkages which are inclusive and responsive to student needs

The teachers are expected to:

- Develop flexible pedagogical styles to engage different learners
- Deliver a curriculum and assessment that challenges and extends students learning
- Develop positive and meaningful relationships with students that promote engagement, wellbeing and learning
- Provide opportunities for student participation in the decision making process of the school

ATTENDANCE

In compliance with Departmental procedures, Mernda Primary School employees are expected to:

- Promote regular attendance with all members of the school community
- Monitor and follow up on absences

BEHAVIOUR

Mernda Primary School promotes positive behaviours by developing and implementing the use of logical and consistent consequences to address appropriate and inappropriate behaviour. As students are expected to participate in the curriculum, the school is committed to engaging all students in a safe and stimulating learning environment. The school will only exclude students in extreme circumstances.

The Leadership Team is expected to:

- Lead and promote preventative approaches to behavioural issues
- Monitor the profile of behavioural issues at the school and effectiveness of implemented strategies
- Provide appropriate professional development opportunities for staff to build their capacity to promote positive behaviours

The Teachers are expected to:

- Explicitly teach interpersonal skills
- Negotiate classroom protocols with students
- Implement behaviour management strategies that are consistent with the whole school approach

- Build a collegiate atmosphere with other staff to share strategies relating to behaviour management

Expectations – Students

ENGAGEMENT

Students are expected to:

- Establish healthy, positive relationships with teachers and students
- Show respect to everyone who attends the school
- Have high expectations for themselves and make the most of the learning opportunities provided
- Report any behaviour which is unsafe or causes them distress

ATTENDANCE

All students are expected to attend school every day that the school is open to the students. If the students can't attend school they must provide an explanation from their parents. Students should arrive to class on time, ready to learn.

BEHAVIOUR

Students are expected to:

- Support each other's learning
- Observe the rules of the school
- Follow all teachers' instructions
- Be considerate and supportive of each other
- Understand that bullying, property damage, violence and inappropriate language is unacceptable
- Understand that disrupting the learning of other students is unacceptable

Expectations – Parents

ENGAGEMENT AND BEHAVIOUR

Parents are expected to:

- Promote the value of education, diversity and cultural differences in the home environment
- Help the school to provide student centered responses by providing all relevant information to the school
- Actively participate in supporting their children's learning by building positive relationships with the school. This can be done by attending student-parent-teacher meetings, special event activities, assemblies and responding to notices and telephone communication in a timely manner
- Understand and support Memda Primary Schools behavioural expectations to promote consistency both in and out of the school

ATTENDANCE

Parents are expected to provide correct enrolment details for their children and ensure that their children attend school regularly. When a child is absent from school, parents must advise the school as soon as possible.

SCHOOLS ACTIONS AND CONSEQUENCES

Mernda Primary School has a series of actions and consequences which have been developed in consultation with the school community. These actions and consequences are used to support individual students and their families, via a staged response approach, which is consistent across the school. The students have some ownership in this process by negotiating the classroom protocols at the beginning of each year.

Rewarding positive behaviour

Staff across the school may:

- Provide positive notes for students to take home
- Provide positive reinforcement and feedback
- Select students for the weekly Certificate of Achievement Award
- Make announcements at assembly to celebrate success
- Write articles in the schools newsletter to celebrate success

Classroom staged response

Individual class program and logical consequences are provided at Mernda Primary School. When positive behaviours are not demonstrated by individual students in the classroom or specialist classes the following staged response is put in place:

1. A warning is given allowing the student to change their behaviour
2. Subsequent warning – student changes room situation
3. A red slip is filled in and the student is removed from the class and sent to a buddy class
4. If behaviour continues, parents notified by Team Leader/Principal/Assistant Principal

The severity of the incident may require immediate removal from the class to ensure safety of all children.

Yard Staged Response

When positive behaviours are not demonstrated by individual students in the yard, the following staged response is put in place:

1. Clarify that the '3 Steps' process has been attempted
2. A warning is given allowing the student to change their behaviour
3. The incident is recorded in a yard duty folder. The yard duty teacher provides a relevant outcome, which is then recorded as well
4. If a situation arises when additional assistance is required, the student is sent to the office with a yellow slip. The Team Leader/Principal/Assistant Principal will then follow up the behaviour and the parents notified if needed

Ongoing Behavioural Issues

For students who exhibit ongoing behavioural issues; these strategies may be used:

- Discussing the behaviour problems and reaching an agreement for future behaviour
- Explicit teaching of appropriate behaviours
- Monitoring and providing feedback – this may be in a parent communication book or a student diary
- Providing Time Out allowing students to have a 'cooling off' period
- Withdrawing a student from an activity, class, sporting event, incursion or excursion due to inappropriate behaviour
- Providing an alternative educational setting within the school
- Counselling for individual students to modify behaviour
- Student support meetings which may involve parents, the Principal, relevant DEECD staff or outside agencies

- In school suspensions for serious and/or continual misconduct. This will be implemented after parents have been notified
- Suspension and Expulsion. For serious disciplinary measures the school follows DEECD Engaging Schools are Effective Schools: Student Engagement Policy Guidelines 2009 developed in response to Ministerial Order No.184

(Refer to <http://www.eduweb.vic.gov.au/edulibrary/public/stuman/wellbeing/segministerorder.pdf> for the Ministerial Order No.184)

This Policy was ratified on the 19 th August 2013
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