



Mernda Primary School 0488

STUDENT WELFARE POLICY

POLICY STATEMENT

Mernda Primary is committed to providing a safe, secure and stimulating learning environment for all students. Students can reach their full educational potential only when they are happy, healthy and safe, and when there is a positive school culture to engage and support them in their learning. Our school acknowledges that student wellbeing and student learning outcomes are inextricably linked.

It is fundamental to acknowledge that each teacher is a vital source of support and a determinant in the success of their students. The teachers at this school will work collectively to ensure that students feel valued and cared for, have meaningful opportunities to contribute to the school and can effectively engage with their learning. This school recognises the need to be engaging and inclusive, recognising and responding to the diverse needs of our students, accommodating different learning profiles and rates of learning and intervening early to identify and respond to individual student needs.

Our school strives to be a learning community where students and teachers can relate well to each other, and where different ideas and viewpoints are valued and respected.

Refer: The [*Effective Schools are Engaging Schools: Student Engagement Policy Guidelines*](#)

Note: This policy is a transition document as all Victorian Government schools are required to develop a Student Engagement Policy and this requirement will be listed on the School Compliance Checklist from 2010.

Refer to: <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/management/schoolimprovement/>

GUIDELINES

- The school will focus on establishing positive and respectful relationships, particularly between teachers and students, and establishing a learning community that provides multiple and diverse opportunities for students to experience success.
- The school will collaboratively develop and implement a fair and respectful whole-school behaviour management approach.
- The school will encourage and provide multiple opportunities for parents/carers and members of the broader community to play an active part in the life of the school and the education of their children.
- The school's curriculum will include pro-social values and behaviour to enable students to acquire knowledge and skills, value diversity and build a culture of learning, community and engagement.
- The school will promote active student participation and provide students with a sense of ownership of their environment.
- The school will support families to engage in their child's learning and build their capacity as active learners.
- The school will establish social/emotional and educational support for vulnerable students and monitor and evaluate progress.
- The school will have processes in place to identify and respond to individual students who require additional assistance and support.
- The school will build strong links with the local community to gain access to an extended network of community members, professionals and educators who can provide expertise and experience that can build the capacity of our school and our teachers to respond to the needs of the students.

PROGRAM

The curriculum programs of the school will recognise and respond to the diverse needs of the school's students by:

- Accommodating different learning profiles and rates of learning
- Intervening early to identify and respond to individual student needs

The school is committed to the delivery of an inclusive curriculum that ensures all our students have access to a quality education to meet their diverse needs.

To improve educational outcomes for students with disabilities, the following key strategies are in place:

- providing parents/carers with a learning program that best suits their child's needs
- involving students and parents in programming and planning decisions
- supporting students' access to programs that let them pursue achievable pathways
- ensuring the expertise of teachers working in our school is maintained and developed

Our school will implement a whole-school behaviour management approach that is based on pro-social values, social competencies, incentives and positive peer relationships.

The key focus will be on prevention and early intervention strategies that:

- define and teach school-wide and classroom expectations
- establish consistent school-wide and classroom consequences for problem behaviour
- establish school-wide and classroom processes for early identification of students experiencing academic and/ or behaviour difficulty
- provide school-wide and classroom processes for ongoing and systematic collection and use of data for decision-making
- empower students by creating multiple opportunities for them to take responsibility and be involved in decision-making
- survey students annually in grades three to six with regard to school connectedness
- provide a physical environment conducive to positive behaviours and effective engagement in learning
- utilise evidence-based interventions, monitored regularly for those students who face difficulty with learning and/or behaviour

[Calmer Classrooms: A Guide to Working with Traumatized Children](#), developed by the Office of the Child Safety Commissioner, provides teachers and schools with effective relationship based classroom and school-wide strategies.

Involvement in our school by parents and carers helps children achieve the best possible learning outcomes. Parents and carers will be provided with the opportunity to participate in school life, both formally and informally, through school council, the Parent Association, volunteering and staying up to date with news about what is happening in education via our newsletter.

The school's strategies to promote pro-social values will be whole-school in focus and include close links with curriculum. The Essential Learning Standards (AUSVELS) includes the learning domain of Physical, Personal and Social Learning, which encourages students to work with others, and to take greater responsibility for their own learning and participation at school. In the context of the AUSVELS, the school curriculum will include pro-social values and behaviours to enable students to acquire knowledge and skills, value diversity and build a culture of learning, community and engagement.

Student voice/student participation is about valuing people and valuing the learning that results when we engage the capacities and multiple voices in the school. It focuses on realising the leadership potential inherent within all learners. There are five dimensions to student participation:

1. Student involvement in school and community development

2. Students as researchers and co-enquirers
3. Student feedback on teaching and learning
4. Students as peer-tutors
5. Student involvement as a manifestation of inclusion principles

The school promotes active ‘student participation’ as an avenue for improving student outcomes and facilitating school change. Student participation ranges from young people sharing their opinions of problems and potential solutions through student council, the S.T.O.P. Bullying team, participation in student surveys or in focus groups associated with school strategic planning. It also includes our students sharing their ‘voice’ by collaborating with teachers to actually improve education outcomes, including helping to improve teaching, curriculum and teacher-student relationships and leading to changes in student assessment.

The school will support families to engage in their child’s learning and build their capacity as active learners. It provides an environment that welcomes all parents/carers and is responsive to them as partners in learning. The school will ensure that the unique experiences and skills of our students’ families enrich the learning environment and the school community.

The school will create successful partnerships with parents/carers and families by:

- ensuring all parents/carers are aware of the school’s Student Welfare Policy
- conducting effective school-to-home and home-to-school communications
- providing volunteer opportunities to enable parents/carers and students to contribute
- involving families with homework and other curriculum-related activities
- involving families as participants in school decision-making
- coordinating resources and services from the community for families, students and the school
- providing opportunities to enhance parenting knowledge and skills

Implementing preventative and early intervention strategies to support positive behaviours is a key part of the Student Welfare Policy at our school. Prevention and early intervention strategies the school will deploy include:

- defining and teaching school-wide and classroom expectations
- establishing consistent school-wide and classroom consequences for problem behaviour
- establishing school-wide and classroom processes for early identification and remediation of students experiencing academic and/ or behaviour difficulty
- providing school-wide and classroom processes for the ongoing collection and use of data for decision-making
- empowering students by creating multiple opportunities for them to take responsibility and be involved in decision-making
- providing a physical environment conducive to positive behaviours and effective engagement in learning
- utilise evidence-based interventions, monitored regularly for those students who face difficulty with learning and/or behaviour

The school will promote and maintain high levels of student attendance and participation through:

- Articulating high expectations to all members of the school community
- Adopting consistent, rigorous procedures to monitor and record student absences
- Following up student absences promptly and consistently
- Implementing data-driven attendance improvement strategies
- Creating safe, supportive learning environments where all students experience success through active participation and engagement in purposeful learning
- Providing early identification of, and supportive intervention for, students at risk of non-attendance
- Linking with local community groups and agencies to maximise program and individual support
- Providing a staged response

The school will use coordinated early intervention and prevention strategies to identify and respond to individual students who require additional assistance and support. The school will provide the following support structures:

- Monitoring of, and responding to, protracted student absences
- Trauma management plan
- Protocol for mandatory reporting
- Student Support Groups for children in need

Longitudinal data will be collected regarding frequency and types of welfare issues, so as to measure the success or otherwise of school-based strategies and approaches.

Some sources of data are:

- The Attitudes to School Survey data
- School level report data
- Parent survey data
- Data from case management work with students

The Student Mapping Tool (previously known as the Students at Risk Mapping Tool) allows our school to easily identify students who have characteristics that are known to increase disengagement at school.

Risk Factors explored by the Student Mapping Tool include:

- Poor attendance
- Low literacy
- Low numeracy
- Problematic school behaviour and relationships through the number of suspensions and the number of days suspended
- Low income or unemployed family background - the occupation code of parents
- Koorie or Torres Strait Islander background
- Refugee or EAL status
- Presence of a physical disability
- Presence of learning disorders leading to integration support
- Receipt of Youth Allowance
- Restricted access arrangements as a result of parent separation
- Presence of a risk alert
- Experience of significant health issues

The school will utilise relevant external student wellbeing support services in order to identify and address the barriers to learning that individual students may be facing. Such services to provide support for students and staff include:

- Psychologist for psychological and academic assessment
- Speech pathologist referrals for speech and language assessment
- Mentors – providing support for ‘at risk’ children
- Department of Human Services case managers and support workers
- Social workers to provide services such as counselling, social skills and anger management programs
- Youth agencies
- Local parent support groups
- Relevant DEECD support staff
- C.A.S.A. [Centre Against Sexual Assault]
- School Focused Youth Service (SFYS)

LINKS AND APPENDICES (including processes related to this policy)

Links which are connected with this policy are:

- <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/healthwellbeing/wellbeing/engagement/default.htm>
- <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/healthwellbeing/additionalneeds/default.htm>
- <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/healthwellbeing/wellbeing/attendance/default.htm>
- <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/healthwellbeing/wellbeing/sfyouthservices/default.htm>
- <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/healthwellbeing/wellbeing/policy.htm>
- <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/healthwellbeing/safety/default.htm>
- <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/healthwellbeing/wellbeing/oohc/effect/behaviour.htm>
- <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/healthwellbeing/wellbeing/oohc/support.htm>

EVALUATION

This policy will be reviewed annually or more often if necessary due to changes in regulations or circumstances.

This policy was ratified on:

16/06/2014
