

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 commitment to the health and wellbeing of all members of the school community.
- (e) our school's policies and procedures for responding to inappropriate student behaviour.

Mooroolbark East 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 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

Mooroolbark East Primary School, situated in Taylor Road Mooroolbark, was established in 1972. The school is set in a peaceful environment of natural, landscaped grounds and spacious sporting areas. The school generally draws children from approximately within a kilometre radius from the school but there are some children who come from the surrounding suburbs of Mt Evelyn, Lilydale, Montrose, Kilsyth and Croydon. New buildings were established in 2017 to cater for the growing enrolments. The student population of 620 children in 2020 comes from a diverse socio-economic background. The enrolment is likely to remain steady for the foreseeable future.

Mooroolbark East Primary School operates within a structure of straight grades with composite classes where necessary. Teachers work in teams for planning, organisation and program implementation. The school also has a strong emphasis on catering for the individual needs of every student. In addition to the core programs Mooroolbark East Primary School offers and encourages participation in a diverse range of extracurricular activities including competitions, Global Education, environmental groups and various sporting events such as Hoop-time, Cross Country, Athletics and Interschool Sport. Lunchtime activities provide options in Movie Making, Chess, Dance and Talent Quests. Students have the opportunity to participate in keyboard and guitar lessons. The school offers Before School and After School Care programs.

We have two sister schools in China and are heavily involved in sister school relationships. This includes strong connections with a school in Uganda. Mandarin is the schools' language and Global Education is a specialist area.

Our school is well supported by an enthusiastic community, an effective School Council and committees which successfully coordinate a range of community and fundraising activities. In acknowledging that a team of students, staff and parents working together produces the best educational outcomes, the school strongly encourages parent participation in many capacities. Parents participate in school working bees, work voluntarily in varied facets of school life, and contribute directly to learning programs such as literacy, numeracy, sport and excursions. A strong partnership between home and school encourages school community members to work together to provide an education facility of quality for Mooroolbark East Primary School.

2. School values, philosophy and vision

Our school sees the education process as a joint responsibility between the school and the family and we have developed a distinctive community ethos. Staff work with parents to promote all aspects of children's development in an atmosphere of friendship and mutual respect. This is reflected in the school values of Kindness, Respect, Resilience and Growth. ILP's and SSG's are a significant feature of teaching planning and focus.

While recognising our student's individuality we believe that they too, must accept responsibility when exercising their personal rights and not infringe on the rights of others. We recognise the need for students to cope socially and emotionally in an ever-changing society and this philosophy underpins many aspects of the school program. Social skills are explicitly taught and a psychologist and chaplain are both employed two days per week.

All children are encouraged to develop to their optimum potential and we are committed to making provision for individual differences. Emphasis is also placed on those skills which will enable students to be flexible and open-minded to new developments. We provide a quality education for all students and encourage children to strive, at all times, to achieve success. We believe all students can achieve given sufficient time and support.

3. Community Health & Wellbeing

As part of our strong focus on the wellbeing of all members of the school community (students, staff and parents/carers), the following initiatives have been undertaken:

- a) Partnership School of The Resilience Project, which focuses on themes such as Gratitude, Empathy, Mindfulness and Emotional Literacy. This has included/includes:
 - i) Staff Wellbeing / Self Care sessions
 - ii) Student Presentations
 - iii) Parent Info Nights
 - iv) Weekly Student Activities (Resilience Project Journals)
 - v) Annual Resilient Youth Survey
- b) Regular Whole School events (based on physical and mental health)
- c) School Wellbeing Team, incl. School Psychologist (employed 0.6)

4. Engagement strategies

Mooroolbark East 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 (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
- 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 Mooroolbark East Primary School use 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 Mooroolbark East 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 are incorporated into our curriculum 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 Representative Council and other forums including year group meetings and Peer Support Groups. Students are also encouraged to speak with their teachers, Assistant Principal and Principal whenever they have any questions or concerns.
- create opportunities for cross—age connections amongst students through school plays, athletics, music programs and peer support programs
- opportunities for student inclusion (i.e. sports teams, clubs, recess and lunchtime activities)
- buddy programs, peers support programs

Targeted

- each year group has a grade level leader, a senior teacher responsible for their year, who 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
- all students in Out of Home Care will be appointed a Learning Mentor, have an Individual Learning Plan and will be referred to Student Support Services for an Educational Needs Assessment
- 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
- staff will apply a trauma-informed approach to working with students who have experienced trauma

Individual

- Student Support Groups, see:
<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/participation/pages/supportgroups.aspx>
- Individual Learning Plan and Behaviour Support Plan
- Program for Students with Disabilities
- referral to Student Welfare Coordinator and Student Support Services
- referral to ChildFirst, Headspace

Mooroolbark East 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 Learning Plan and/or a 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 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:
 - with a disability
 - in Out of Home Care
 - and with other complex needs that require ongoing support and monitoring.

5. Identifying students in need of support

Mooroolbark East Primary School is committed to providing the necessary support to ensure our students are supported intellectually, emotionally and socially. The Student welfare team plays a significant role in developing and implementing strategies help identify students in need of support and enhance student wellbeing. Mooroolbark East 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
- self-referrals or referrals from peers
- [Amend to include other referral pathways]

6. 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 of Respect, Kindness, Growth and Resilience 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.

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.

7. Student behavioural expectations

Behavioural expectations of students, staff and families are grounded in our school's Statement of Values. Student bullying behaviour will be responded to consistently with Example School's Bullying policy.

When a student acts in breach of the behaviour standards of our school community, Mooroolbark East Primary School will institute a staged response, consistent with the Department's Student Engagement and Inclusion Guidelines. Where appropriate, parents will be informed about the inappropriate behaviour and the disciplinary action taken by teachers and other school staff, either by phone or email (via GrdeXpert)

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:

- a traffic light warning system in the classroom:
 - first warning
 - second warning - isolated in classroom
 - third warning - sent to another room for 15 minutes.
 - sent to leadership
- withdrawal of privileges
- referral to the Year Level Coordinator
- restorative practices
- detentions
- behaviour reviews
- suspension
- expulsion

Suspension and expulsion are measures of last resort and may only be used in particular situations consistent with Department policy, available at:

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/participation/pages/engagement.aspx>

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

8. Engaging with families

Mooroolbark East 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.

9. Evaluation

Mooroolbark East 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
- SOCS

FURTHER INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

REVIEW CYCLE

This policy was last updated on 17/08/2020 and is scheduled for review on 17th August 2024.