



Menzies Creek 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 Dale McInerney.

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.

Menzies Creek 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

Menzies Creek Primary School is located amongst trees in the Dandenong Ranges.

Talented and passionate staff work collaboratively from Foundation to Year 6 to deliver a structured, explicit based pedagogy across the curriculum, centred around breaking down the curriculum to ensure the best learning outcomes. Curriculum is delivered in short, sharp lessons where outcomes are modelled and delivered in ways to reduce cognitive load on our students. Once knowledge is established children are offered rich and authentic learning opportunities. Our staff work to incorporate high impact teaching practices into this process to help ensure learning is maximised and transferable.

Teachers are active learners. PLC groups foster collaborative learning for teachers. Rich and varied student data collected through a range of targeted formative assessments, along with professional readings are central elements of these communities. Time is allocated for peer observations and coaching on a fortnightly basis. Teachers continuously seek out external professional learning opportunities as well.

Community and inclusivity are crucial themes within our school. We have children with a diverse range of abilities attend our school and we work to ensure that learning experiences and environments cater to the needs of all students.

Student voice and agency is an area of focus for the school. Students take on leadership roles across the school and SVT is active. Student voice is included in curriculum development and assessment across the school.

Family involvement is prioritised. Families are involved in classroom learning and intervention programs. Families are involved in fundraising events, picnics, festivals and working bees. Our School Council is proactive and welcoming with enthusiastic, hardworking subcommittees.

We work closely with our feeder secondary schools sharing planning, teaching across school and regular visits to ensure the best possible Year 6 to 7 transition can occur.

2. School values, philosophy and vision

We pride ourselves on providing a fun and engaging learning community under the vision:

‘We walk hand in hand to grow curious, caring, lifelong learners.’

We proactively practice our values in the form of our three school guidelines: do your best, help others succeed and respect your environment.

3. Wellbeing and engagement strategies

At Menzies Creek Primary, we believe that the well-being of the child is just as important as their academic progress, if not more so. Further, it is critical that a child feels safe and secure in their environment for them to be engaged in their learning. As a staff, we have researched successful programs and implemented these as Aligned Practices throughout the school. By doing so, children know what to expect from any staff member at any level in the school.



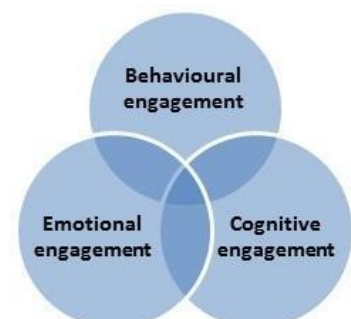
Student Engagement

Student engagement is a challenging concept to define, as it is a complex construct influenced by multiple factors. Fredericks, Blumenfield and Paris (2004) identify three dimensions of engagement:

- **behavioural engagement:** students’ participation in education, including the academic, social and extracurricular activities of the school
- **emotional engagement:** students’ emotional reactions in the classroom and in the school (a sense of belonging or connectedness to the school)
- **cognitive engagement:** students’ investment in their learning (motivation and self-regulation)

Some of the factors that influence student engagement at school are:

- **Teacher factors:** These include a teacher’s interaction style (e.g. enjoyment and shared focus, support, responsiveness, directedness, verbal praise); The behavioural and academic expectations held by the teacher.



- **School factors:** These include physical setting factors (i.e. physical layout and arrangement of classroom, sensory factors/noise levels, lighting etc.), and consistent and structured approaches to the provision of student support and disciplinary measures.
- **Student factors:** These include a student's physical, emotional, cognitive and behavioural states. They also include health issues and differing levels of ability, as well as peer relationships within the classroom and broader school environment.
- **Family and community factors:** These include students' residential circumstances, a family's support and involvement in their child's education, and all the relationships within a student's family.
- **Curriculum and resources factors:** These include the availability and type of learning resources, such as; technology, dimensions of the learning tasks (level of difficulty, interest, meaningfulness to learner), task design, learning goals and objectives, and assessment approaches.

A summary of the universal (whole of school), targeted (year group specific) and individual engagement strategies used by our school is included below:

- High and consistent expectations for staff, students, and parents/carers
- Prioritise positive relationships between staff and students
- Create a culture that is inclusive, engaging, and supportive
- Welcoming and responsive to all parents/carers
- Analysing and being responsive to a range of school data
- Deliver a broad curriculum tailored to student interests, strengths, and aspirations
- Use instructional framework to ensure evidenced-based, high-yield teaching practices
- Adopt a range of teaching and assessment approaches to respond to diverse learning styles
- Incorporate values and school philosophy into curriculum
- Carefully plan transition programs for different stages of schooling
- Positive behavior and student achievement is acknowledged
- Monitor attendance and implement improvement strategies
- Students have opportunities to provide feedback and contribute to decisions about school operations
- Create opportunities for cross-age connections among students
- Students can self-refer to School Chaplain and other support services
- Positive behavior support programs in place such as Respectful Relationships and Student Voice
- Programs, incursions, and excursions developed to address specific needs or behavior
- Opportunities for student inclusion in sports teams, clubs, etc.
- Buddy programs and peer support programs

- Measures in place to address discrimination or harassment.

Targetted

- Junior and Senior PLC Leaders monitor the health and wellbeing of students in their year, and act as a point of contact for students who may need additional support
- Our staff work together to provide Koorie students with the necessary support to actively participate in their studies. We strive to create an inclusive and respectful learning environment that recognizes and values the cultural heritage of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.
- Our staff strive to create a safe and inclusive space for our LGBTIQ+ students where they can learn, grow, and feel respected. We follow and go beyond the Department's guidelines for providing support to our LGBTIQ students to ensure everyone in our community is valued and respected..
- 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 Education 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
- our wellbeing team support classroom teachers to undertake health promotion and social skills development in response to needs identified by student wellbeing data
- staff will apply a trauma-informed approach to working with students who have experienced trauma

Individual

Menzies Creek Primary School implements a range of strategies that support and promote individual engagement. These can include:

- building constructive relationships with all students
- 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 classroom set up
- referring the student to:
 - o school-based wellbeing supports

- o Student Support Services
- 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 Re-engagement programs such as Navigator

Where necessary the school will support the student's family to engage by:

- being responsive and sensitive to changes in the student's circumstances, health and wellbeing
- work with external allied health professionals, services, or agencies that are also involved in supporting the student's needs, with the consent and support of the student and/or their family.
- 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:
 - o with a disability
 - o in Out of Home Care
 - o with other complex needs that require ongoing support and monitoring.

4. Identifying students in need of support

Menzies Creek Primary School is committed to providing the necessary support to ensure our students are supported intellectually, emotionally and socially. The SIT and Leadership Team play a significant role in developing and implementing strategies to help identify students in need of support and enhance student wellbeing. Menzies Creek 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

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 and management

Behavioural expectations of students are grounded in our school's Statement of Values and Guidelines.

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, Menzies Creek 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 implements 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 and guiding the student to the School Guidelines
- 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 PLC Leader
- restorative practices
- 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 Menzies Creek 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

Menzies Creek 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 curriculum-related activities such as celebrations of learning

- 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

Menzies Creek 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
- Student Online Case System

Menzies Creek 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
- 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

POLICY REVIEW AND APPROVAL

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| Policy last reviewed | May 2023 |
| Consultation | SVT - Date: October '23 School Council - Date: October '23 |
| Approved by | Principal |
| Next scheduled review date | May 2025 |