



Student Wellbeing and Engagement

Policy

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This policy was last ratified by School Council on 26/11/18

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) available support services for students and families
- (d) our school's policies and procedures for responding to inappropriate student behaviour.

Mt Eliza Primary School (MEPS) 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.

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

School Profile

MEPS is situated on the Mornington Peninsula approximately 50 kilometres south-east of Melbourne. In 2018, the School's student population is 650.

Facilities

The school facilities include permanent classrooms with withdrawal facilities, interview and teacher meeting rooms, a library/resource centre, classrooms for the creative arts, including Music, Dance, Drama and Art. There is a school hall and an administration building which includes a staffroom. The school currently has 14 relocatable classrooms and a gymnasium which also includes a kitchen which is used for the School's kitchen garden program. The original school building is used for Music, Dance and Drama, Community programs and the Out of School Hours program which operates each morning and afternoon. The school has grounds which include sporting facilities and playground areas.

Demographics

The demographics of the School are stable. The student population is made up of students from predominantly Anglo Saxon or second-generation European backgrounds. A small number of students have English as a second language. Also, the School has a small number of Koorie students and students in out of home care as well as students who are supported by the Program for Students with Disabilities (PSD). The school has a Student Family and Education Occupation (SFOE) index of 0.2088.

Staffing

In 2018, the School employs a Principal and an Assistant Principal, three Learning Teachers, 22 full-time and 10 part-time classroom teachers, and 11 Education Support (ES) staff.

Curriculum

MEPS provides a sequential curriculum which includes literacy and numeracy programs as well as Physical Education, Performing Arts (Music, Dance, Drama), Visual Arts, Languages Other Than English (LOTE) (Indonesian), Science, Library and a Kitchen Garden Program. The school also provides literacy intervention programs for students who require extra assistance.

Information Technology is an integral part of the School curriculum, and is provided through a Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) program for students in Years 5 and 6.

The classroom teaching program is supported by a wide range of extra-curricular activities including excursions and camps, guest speakers, the human powered vehicle program, extra drama and dance programs as well as a range of lunchtime clubs and activities including sports programs, and walking groups. Curriculum planning occurs in teams with all staff members contributing to the development of classroom activities.

Student Wellbeing

MEPS provides a wide range of student wellbeing programs focusing on student safety, forming and maintaining positive relationships, citizenship and resilience. The school values are respect, responsibility, resilience, connectedness and challenge. Students are encouraged to demonstrate the school values throughout their time at the School.

Student leadership opportunities are available to students through, for example, the Student Representative Council (SRC) and the School Leaders program, as well as through sporting teams.

The main challenge has been ensuring our high capacity students reach their full potential. An action research project into how to best cater for our most capable students has resulted in a number of school-wide practices and approaches.

School Values, Statement and Vision

School Values: Respect, Responsibility, Resilience, Connectedness and Challenge

School Vision: Together we grow

School Wellbeing statement: At MEPS we choose to think and act safely, make wise choices, listen and speak respectfully and be brave enough to learn.

Engagement Strategies

MEPS 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.

Whole School strategies

- 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 MEPS use a consistent 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 MEPS 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 student voice forums. Students are also encouraged to speak with their teachers, Student Wellbeing Teacher (SWT), Assistant Principal and Principal whenever they have any questions or concerns
- create opportunities for cross—age connections amongst students through the buddy program and whole school multi-age days
- all students are welcome to self-refer to the SWT, First Aid officer, 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
 - Cyber safety
 - Safe Schools
- programs, incursions and excursions developed to address issue specific behaviour (i.e. mindfulness and relationship programs)
- opportunities for student inclusion (i.e. sports teams, clubs, recess and lunchtime activities)

Targeted Strategies

- each year group has a Student Wellbeing Teacher (SWT), a wellbeing focussed teacher responsible for their year level, who monitors the wellbeing of students in their year level, and acts as a point of contact for students who may need additional support
- provide all Koorie students with an Individual Learning Plan and connection to the Koorie Engagement Support Officer as needed
- 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
- staff will undertake professional 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

Specific student strategies are applied and provided on a case by case basis.

- Termly Student Support Group meetings are established for the following:
 - Program for Students with Disabilities (funded students)
 - Out of Home Care Students
 - students with serious health issues that requires regular monitoring
 - Koorie students
 - students who have Visiting Teacher services.

- Individual Learning Plan (ILP) and Behaviour Improvement Plan (BIP)
 - students working 18 months above the expected level in Literacy and/or Numeracy and/or display exceptional abilities in a specific discipline requiring regular monitoring and support, will have an ILP that is reviewed three times a year. Term 1, midyear and Term 4
 - students working 12 months behind the expected level in Literacy and/or Numeracy will have an ILP that is reviewed three times a year. Term 1, midyear and Term 4
 - students who require support strategies to develop their behaviour skills will have a BIP that will be reviewed regularly throughout the year as needed.
 - Students who require an individual plan to cater for their specific needs
- teacher or parent can make a referral to the SWT teacher
- referral to Assistant Principal and Student Support Services
- referral to ChildFirst, Headspace
- referral to Lookout for Out of Home School Students.

MEPS 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 Improvement Plan
- considering if any environmental changes need to be made, for example changing the classroom set up
- referring the student to:
 - Student Wellbeing Teacher
 - 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
 - re-engagement programs such as Student Development Centre.

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 Plan in collaboration with the student and their family.

Identifying Students in Need of Support

MEPS 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. MEPS 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.

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 Wellbeing Statement highlights the rights and responsibilities of members of our community.

'At Mt Eliza Primary School we choose to think and act safely, make wise choices, listen and speak respectfully and brave enough to learn.'

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, (refer to the Parent Concerns/Complaints Policy).

Student Behaviour Expectations

Behavioural expectations of students, staff and families are grounded in our school's values and wellbeing statement. Student bullying behaviour will be responded to consistently with MEPS's Bullying Prevention Policy.

When a student acts in breach of the behaviour standards of our school community, MEPS 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.

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:

- referring to the expectations that have not been met
- restoring the relationship between the effected children through a restorative conversation
- reminding the student of the rules and expectations
- rectifying the situation or damage
- reflecting on behaviour in a designated place in the classroom, schoolyard or office
- attendance at the Reset room in the library at lunch time for 30 minutes
- withdrawal of privileges
- 30 minute detention before school at 8:15am, after 3 Reset Room incidents in one term. Every subsequent Reset that term will result in the parent/carer bringing the child to school for the detention

- a re-entry meeting will be held the morning following a significant disruptive behaviour episode. This meeting will involve the student, parent/carer, teacher and a member of the leadership team. The student will not be able to return to the classroom until this meeting takes place
- in school and home school 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.

Engaging with Families

MEPS 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 Communication Protocol
- 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.

Evaluation

MEPS 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
- student voice focus groups
- incidents data
- school reports
- parent survey data
- case management
- CASES21
- Student Online Case System (SOCS)

This policy will be reviewed as part of MEPS two-year review cycle

School Council President: Kimberly Davidson

Signature:

Date: 26/11/18