
Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy



HELP FOR NON-ENGLISH SPEAKERS

If you need help to understand the information in this policy, please contact Merrijig Primary School on (03) 5777 5559 or merrijig.ps@education.vic.gov.au.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that all students and members of our school community understand:

- our commitment to providing a safe and supportive learning environment for students
- expectations for positive student behaviour
- support available to students and families
- our school's policies and procedures for responding to inappropriate student behaviour.

Merrijig 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.

POLICY

School profile

Merrijig Primary School is located 18km east of Mansfield in northeast Victoria. It is situated in the Delatite Valley and bordered by the Delatite River and Mt Timbertop. The school has picturesque views of the Victorian High Country including the alpine resorts of Mt Buller and Mt Stirling.

The school, established in 1874, consists of a newer building and the original school building. A multi-age structure operates from F-6 with F/2 in one classroom and Years 3-6 in another. We also have a room for specialist subjects where we offer LOTE (French), music and performing arts and library (MARC Van). In addition we have a volunteer run art program and a specialist HPE/Sport program. The original building is currently an administration/staff hub, but it also provides a space for community use.

The school's current enrolment stands at just over 30 students. The majority of children attending the school travel by bus, with no-one living within a three-kilometre radius of the school itself. Most students are from an Anglo-Saxon background. A number of families travel from Mansfield who are attracted to the school due to its rural setting, teacher expertise, and small class sizes.

We strive to provide a nurturing and challenging environment that empowers students to reach their personal best, both academically and socially.

School values, philosophy and vision

Merrijig Primary School's Statement of Values and School Philosophy is integral to the work that we do and is the foundation of our school community. Students, staff and members of our school community are encouraged to live and demonstrate our core values of Respect, Motivation, Integrity, Tolerance and Empathy at every opportunity.

Our school's vision is to develop caring, confident individuals who have the skills and positive attitudes to reach their

personal potential, be lifelong learners and be valued members of the community.

Our Statement of Values is available on our school website.

Engagement strategies

Merrijig 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
- deliver a broad curriculum to ensure that students are able to choose subjects and programs that are tailored to their interests, strengths and aspirations
- teachers at Merrijig Primary School use a school developed 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 Merrijig 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
- all students have the opportunity to contribute to and provide feedback on decisions about school operations through forums including Junior School Council. Students are also encouraged to speak with all staff and/or the 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
- All students are welcome to self-refer to the 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
 - School Wide Positive Behaviour Support
- programs, incursions and excursions developed to address issue specific behaviour (i.e., anger management programs)
- opportunities for student inclusion (i.e., sports teams, clubs, recess and lunchtime activities)
- buddy programs, peers support programs

Targeted

- each class has a teacher who monitors the health and wellbeing of students in their class, and acts as a point of contact for students who may need additional support
- all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students will have an Individual Learning Plan completed annually for

them

- connect all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students with a Koorie Engagement Support Officer
- all students in Out of Home Care will 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

Individual

Merrijig 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 Child First
 - 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 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
- 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.

Identifying students in need of support

Merrijig Primary School 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 help identify students in need of support and enhance student wellbeing. Merrijig 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

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, 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.

Student behavioural expectations

	Students	Parents/Carers	Principals/Teachers & Staff
Engagement (participation in the classroom and other school activities)	Demonstrate: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • preparedness to engage in and take full advantage of the school program • effort to do their very best • self-discipline to ensure a cooperative learning environment and model the school values • teamwork 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote positive outcomes by valuing the importance of education and liaising with the school on their child's progress/needs • Support their child in their preparedness for the school day and in the provision of a supportive home environment • Monitor their child's school involvement and progress and communicate with the school when necessary • Are informed and supportive of school programs and actively participate in school events/parent groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school will comply with its duty of care obligations and have a responsibility to provide an educational environment that can effectively engage all students • The school will provide appropriate, relevant and challenging curriculum that gives students the opportunity to have input into their learning and experience success
Attendance	All students are expected to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • attend and be punctual for all timetabled classes every day that the school is open to students • be prepared to participate fully in lessons • bring a note from their parents/carers explaining an absence/lateness 	Parents/Carers are expected to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ensure that their child's enrolment details are correct • ensure their child attends regularly • advise the school as soon as possible when a child is absent • account for all student absences • keep family holidays within scheduled school holidays • Support their child's learning during absences and work with the school to reintegrate students after prolonged absences 	In accordance with DET procedures the school will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proactively promote regular attendance • mark rolls accurately each lesson • follow up on any unexplained absences promptly and consistently • Identify trends via data analysis • Report attendance data in the school's Annual Report
Behaviour	Students are expected to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • model the schools core 	Parents/Carers are expected to:	The school will deliver an inclusive and comprehensive

	<p>values of diversity, achievement, responsibility and endeavour</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • always treat others with respect. • never physically or verbally abuse others. • take responsibility for their behaviour and its impact on others • obey all reasonable requests of staff. • respect the rights of others to learn. No student has the right to impact on the learning of others. • respect the property of others. • bring correct equipment to all classes • comply with the school's policies and work with teachers and parents in developing strategies to improve outcomes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • have high expectations of their child's behaviour and an understanding of the schools behavioural expectations • Communicate with the school regarding their child's circumstances • Cooperate with the school by assisting in the development and enforcement of strategies to address individual needs 	<p>curriculum which promotes positive behaviours and emphasises the well-being of every child</p> <p>The school will employ whole school and classroom practices to establish a climate in which appropriate behaviour is the norm for all students and focus on the implementation of preventative and early intervention strategies to deal with attendance and behavioural issues</p> <p>The school will consistently apply its Behavioural Policy through a shared collegiate understanding and only exclude students in extreme circumstances.</p> <p>The school recognises that for some students' additional support may be needed in the form of staged responses and is committed to working with families to reintegrate students after exclusion</p>
--	-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

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 Merrijig Primary School's Bullying policy.

When a student acts in breach of the behaviour standards of our school community, we will institute a staged response, consistent with the Department's [Student Engagement policy](#). 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:

- warning a student that their behaviour is inappropriate
- 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 Year Level Coordinator
- restorative practices
- detentions
- behaviour reviews
- 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 Merrijig Primary School is responsible for ensuring all suspensions and expulsions are recorded on CASES21.

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

Engaging with families

Merrijig 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.

Evaluation

Merrijig 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

Merrijig 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:

- Provided to staff at induction and included in staff handbook/manual
- Discussed at staff meetings/briefings as required
- Made available publicly on our school website
- Made available in hard copy from school administration upon request

Our school will also ensure it follows the mandatory parent/carers notification requirements with respect to suspensions and expulsions outlined in the Department's policies at:

- [Suspension process](#)
- [Expulsions - Decision](#)

FURTHER INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

This policy should be read in conjunction with following policies on the Department's Policy and Advisory Library (PAL):

- [Student Engagement](#)
- [Behaviour — Students](#)
- [Suspensions](#)
- [Expulsions](#)

The following additional resources provide additional information:

- [Bully Stoppers](#)
- [Safe Schools](#)
- [Respectful Relationships](#)

POLICY REVIEW AND APPROVAL

Policy last reviewed	28/02/2022
Consultation	Staff, students and school council
Approved by	Principal
Next scheduled review date	Before March, 2024