

# Mount Evelyn Primary School

## School Policies Manual

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### Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy



#### Help for non-English speakers

If you need help to understand the information in this policy please contact Mount Evelyn Primary School on (03) 9736 2233 or email [mount.evelyn.ps@education.vic.gov.au](mailto:mount.evelyn.ps@education.vic.gov.au)

### 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.

Mount Evelyn 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.

### CONTENTS

1. School profile
2. School values, philosophy and vision
3. Wellbeing and engagement strategies
4. Identifying students in need of support
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## POLICY

### 1. School profile

Established in 1910 and located approximately 50km east of the CBD, our school is located amongst native bushland and is seen to be the hub of the community. Families and community members are highly involved in school events, and the participation of parents is strongly encouraged.

We have approximately 400 students enrolled from Foundation to level six and although our overall socio-economic profile places us in the low-medium range, we cater for a very diverse community. Mount Evelyn PS has 36 equivalent full time staff including 2 Principal class, 26 full and part time teaching staff and 12 Education Support and Administration staff. We also employ a fulltime wellbeing officer, chaplains to ensure the wellbeing of our students and refer students to external organisations as needed.

We have high expectations of our students and strive to provide a nurturing and challenging environment that empowers students to reach their personal best, academically, emotionally and socially.

### 2. School values, philosophy and vision

Mount Evelyn PS ensures that everyone in our school community will be treated with fairness and respect. In turn, we will strive to create a school that is inclusive and safe, where everyone is empowered to participate and learn. We prepare our students for fulfilling and productive lives in a rapidly changing world and encourage them to develop a lifelong love of learning.

With the active support of the community, we strive to maximise students' curiosity and engagement in their learning. We provide strong supports for students' social and emotional needs and our high quality, passionate staff deliver challenging and inspiring curriculum.

Our school values of respect, responsibility, care, integrity and safety are at the core of everything we do. These values are evident in all learning spaces and ensure consistency and a common language across all areas of the school.

### 3. Wellbeing and engagement strategies

Mount Evelyn PS has in place 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 whole school, targeted or year level specific and individual engagement strategies used by our school is included below:

#### Whole school

- *high and consistent expectations of all staff, students, 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 including clubs of interest, Hands on Learning and engaging programs that are tailored to student interests, strengths and aspirations*
- *use of a Gradual Release of Responsibility instructional framework to ensure an explicit, common and shared model of instruction is implemented across the school and that evidenced-based, high impact teaching practices are incorporated into all lessons*
- *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*
- *incorporate our school values into our curriculum and promote this to students, staff and parents so that they are shared and celebrated as the foundation of our school community*
- *carefully planned transition and induction programs to support students moving through the different stages of their schooling*
- *positive behaviour and student achievement is acknowledged in the classroom, and formally in 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 multi age focus groups. We have an increasing focus on student voice and agency. Students are also encouraged to speak with their teachers, wellbeing coordinator, the assistant Principal and Principal whenever they have any questions or concerns.*
- *create opportunities for cross—age connections amongst students through school events, athletics, music programs and peer support programs*
- *All students are welcome to self-refer to the Student Wellbeing Coordinator, School Chaplain, 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*
  - *Berry Street Educational Model (BSEM)*
- *Programs and external providers are sourced to address issue specific behaviour (ie. anger management or social skills programs)*
- *opportunities are created to encourage student inclusion (ie. sports teams, clubs, recess*

*and lunchtime activities)*

- *buddy programs, peers support and mediation programs*

### **Targeted/Cohort specific**

- *each year group has classroom teachers, a team leader and support staff who monitor the health and wellbeing of students in that year level and act as a point of contact for students who may need additional support*
- *all students from Foundation to level six have individualised, personal goals which have been negotiated with the class teacher*
- *all students from Foundation to level six have self-management plans based on the BSEM.*
- *all Koorie students are connected with a Koorie Engagement Support Officer*
- *all students in Out of Home Care are appointed a Learning Mentor, have an Individual Learning Plan and a Student Support Group (SSG) and are referred to Student Support Services for an Educational Needs Assessment*
- *classroom teachers and wellbeing staff undertake health promotion, body safety and social skills 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**

*Mount Evelyn PS implements a range of strategies that support and promote individual student wellbeing and engagement. These include:*

- *building supportive and constructive relationships with students at risk or students who are vulnerable due to complex individual circumstances*
- *regularly meeting with students and their parents or carers to talk about how best to help the student engage with school*
- *developing Individual Learning Plans and/or a Behaviour Support Plans as needed*
- *making environmental changes if needed eg. changing the classroom set up*
- *referring students to:*
  - *school-based wellbeing supports*
  - *Student Support Services*
  - *Appropriate external supports including youth and family services, allied health professionals, child and adolescent mental health services, Child Protection and 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 with any external allied health professionals, services or agencies that are supporting the student*
- *monitoring individual student attendance and developing Attendance Improvement Plans*

*in collaboration with the student and their family*

- *holding regular Student Support Group meetings for all students:*
  - *with a disability*
  - *in Out of Home Care*
  - *from Koorie or Torres Strait Islander backgrounds*
  - *with other complex needs that require ongoing support and monitoring*

#### **4. Establishing a culturally safe environment**

At Mount Evelyn Primary School, we are committed to establishing an inclusive and culturally safe school where the strengths of Aboriginal culture, values and practices are respected.

We think about how every student can have a positive experience in a safe environment. For Aboriginal students, we recognise the link between Aboriginal culture, identity and safety and actively create opportunities for Aboriginal students and the Aboriginal community to have a voice and presence in our school planning, policies, and activities.

We have developed the following strategies to promote cultural safety in our school community:

- Level and whole school assemblies, and other whole school events are opened with an Acknowledgement of Country
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags are on display at the school office and throughout the school
- Students learn about, acknowledge and commemorate significant days and events in indigenous culture including Reconciliation Week and Sorry Day.
- Books celebrating indigenous culture and histories and perspectives are available in the school library and classrooms.
- Indigenous perspectives are included in curriculum plans at all levels.
- Ensure a zero tolerance stance is taken towards acts of racism within the school. Students will be supported through the school's wellbeing programs to understand about forms of racism.
- Ensure all staff have an understanding of indigenous cultures and through completion of CUST (Cultural Understanding and Safety Training)

#### **5. Identifying students in need of support**

Mount Evelyn PS is committed to providing the necessary support to ensure our students are supported intellectually, emotionally and socially. Our student wellbeing team plays a significant role in developing and implementing strategies to help identify students in need of support. We use the following information and tools to identify students in need of extra emotional, social or educational support:

- personal, health and learning information is gathered upon enrolment and while the student is enrolled
- 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, referrals from peers or families

## 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 highlights the rights and responsibilities of members of our community.

Students have the right to:

- learn in a happy, safe and secure environment that provides challenge and support
- be treated with respect and fairness
- learn in an environment free from bullying, harassment, violence, discrimination or intimidation
- express their ideas, feelings and concerns
- feel safe, secure and happy at school
- learn in an environment free from bullying, harassment, violence, racism, discrimination or intimidation

Students have the responsibility to:

- come to school each day prepared to learn
- 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.

## 7. Student behavioural expectations

Behavioural expectations of students, staff and families are grounded in our school's Statement of Values. Student bullying behaviour is not tolerated and will be responded to consistently with Mount Evelyn Primary School's Bullying Prevention policy.

When a student acts in breach of the behaviour standards of our school community, the 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 implement 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:*

- *communicating with 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 school leadership*
- *restorative practices*
- *behaviour support and intervention meetings*
- *suspension*
- *expulsion*

See **Appendix 1** for Mount Evelyn PS's whole school approach to behaviour management.

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 Mount Evelyn 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.

## **8. Engaging with families**

Mount Evelyn 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
- 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

Mount Evelyn 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 and GradeXpert, including attendance and absence data
- SOCS

Mount Evelyn 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 in transition and enrolment packs
- 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 and can be located on the school's website:

<https://mtevelynps.vic.edu.au/our-school/#policies>

- Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy
- Bullying Prevention Policy
- Inclusion and Diversity Policy
- Statement of Values and School Philosophy

#### **POLICY REVIEW AND APPROVAL**

Policy last reviewed	13/9/22
Consultation	School Council 15 <sup>th</sup> June 2022
Approved by	Trevor Vass, Principal
Next scheduled review date	June 2024 The mandatory review cycle for this policy is 2 years