

Mildura Primary School

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 school's policies and procedures for responding to inappropriate student behaviour.

Mildura 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

Mildura Primary School (MPS) is one of four large primary schools in the Mildura Rural City Council local government area. It has a long history of service to the community. The school has benefited from all students coming together on one campus (2012) with the completion of major BER infrastructure projects which provided 6 new classrooms, new library facilities, a half sized Gymnasium, Art, Music, Physical Education and Canteen facilities. The school has access to adjacent substantial local government facilities and clearly takes great pride in how it presents to the community.

The school currently has an enrolment of about 350+ students. Class sizes are between 18 – 25 students. MPS has a Student Family Occupation (SFO) index of 0.87 and a Student Family Occupation Education (SFOE) index of 0.75 confirming a profile of family poverty and disadvantage which is compounded over generations. A high proportion (up to 30%) of children entering the school has significant learning delays. These children are of school age without the necessary pre-cursors for successful learning. There is significant student transience. The significant mobility provides additional challenges and requires close monitoring and early assessment of student needs.

The multi-cultural student population comprises of a third Koorie students, 90 Islander students and others from a range of cultural backgrounds including Turkish, Sudanese and Afghani. There are 17 students funded under the Program for Disabilities (4.8% against the Victorian average of less than 3%). They are supported by additional staff employed for the purpose.

The low SES promotes a perception from some sections in the broader community of the school being a poor performer in some key areas compared to others. The improvements in student learning and in the overall school climate evident over the last few years challenge these perceptions. Nevertheless, they persist in some quarters.

MPS leadership comprises the Principal, 2 Assistant Principals, 2 Leading Teachers, and Learning Specialist in charge of AIP priorities and units' coordination. There are 18 classroom teachers; Specialists in Art, Physical Education, Performing Arts and Barkindji; two literacy support teachers; and additional staff to support coaching and students learning, including 11 Educational Support staff.

The school has two Assistant Principals who work closely with the parent community, as does the Principal who interviews the parent/carers of each child seeking enrolment.

The MPS Koorie and Islander workforce work closely with the community building strong relationships between the families and student access to quality education.

A Total Learning Centre and Connected Beginnings Site is located at MPS. The school's success at working closely with all the elements of its community, and the broader community, is an outcome of priority attention, planning and action.

The Total Learning Centre for preschool students and their parents will be heavily supported by our Koorie and Tongan Educators throughout the year. Through this we hope in the long term to have Preps who are better prepared for school.

The aim of the Connected Beginnings program is to support the integration of early childhood, maternal and child health, and family support services with schools in a number of disadvantaged Indigenous communities so that children are well prepared for school. Over time, this will contribute to reducing the disparity in school readiness and educational outcomes between Indigenous and non-Indigenous children

The proposed project aims to further build on the successful work of the Total Learning Centre and adding to the space a conduit for families to access health and family support services. Through connections and collaboration with our community the project will provide access and support to access services that will wrap around the families of Mildura to improve their health and build skills to function in the community. The goal is to empower members of the community to build knowledge, skills and understanding to work with each other and create a sustainable positive outcome for all.

The project will bring together many of the services that stand alone in the Mildura area and work with members of the community to give them directions and access to these services. The common outcome being to provide families and children aged 0 to 5 years of age with the help needed to have school ready children by the age of 5 years. Often children and their families are in need of help with occupational therapy, regular doctor check-ups, and speech support. The project will also provide access to preschools and ensure young children are attending regularly to benefit from the early years programs provided.

Through a culture of 'High Expectations Relationships' for all, Mildura Primary works to have a calm and focused environment where children are happy and highly engaged in their learning.

2. School values, philosophy and vision

“Kids come first at Mildura Primary School”

We value:

- Learning
- Relationships
- Safety
- Culture
- Our Community

Mildura Primary School is a great place to be. To learn, to teach, to work and to be part of for all children, parents and staff.

MPS is committed to providing an environment where every student can learn. A culture of high quality relationships underpins the school in its work to raise the academic and social success of all students. This belief in high quality relationships is pursued through the day to day interactions with teachers, students and parents, school teams, and the coaching. MPS has a firm commitment to inclusion, active participation and social justice, and is proud of its multicultural context.

Beliefs:

- High Quality Relationships
- Sense of Community
- Supportive learning environment
- Seek to understand others cultures
- Time to have conversations
- Inclusion for all

We aim:

- To have high quality relationships for all in the school community.
- To have the highest quality teaching and learning throughout the school.
- To improve student achievement in Literacy and Numeracy.
- To develop students to their full capacity in a stimulating learning environment which sees them motivated to learn and highly and actively engaged with their learning.
- To provide an inclusive, safe, orderly and stimulating environment for all students.

We who teach and those who work in support of teaching and learning at Mildura primary are here for the one central purpose of providing the very best educational and learning opportunity for every child in our school.

3. Engagement strategies

Mildura 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 Mildura Primary School use an Every Lesson Counts 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 Mildura 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
- 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 Student Wellbeing Coordinator, School Chaplain, Year Group Leaders, 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
 - Visible Wellbeing
 -
- 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 year group has a Year level Coordinator, who monitors 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 Students are catered for on a case by case basis

- Student Support Groups – meet each term to discuss learning and behaviour plans
- Individual Learning Plans and Behaviour Support Plans are updated each term
- Program for Students with Disabilities support students
- referral to Student Welfare Coordinator and Student Support Services
- referral to ChildFirst, Headspace
- Navigator
- Lookout

Mildura 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
 - 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 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.

4. Identifying students in need of support

Mildura 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. Mildura 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, 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.

6. Student behavioural expectations

School Rules – Student have the right to learn and Staff to teach.

There are two main sets of school rules.

The first set concerns the fact that children and teachers have a right to be safe.

The second set is to enable learning to take place.

The process of compliance centres on the belief that every child has the right to learn and that every teacher has the right to teach. No child has the right to behave in such a way as to stop teaching and learning.

Behaviour of Students

All staff must be extremely vigilant in ensuring that the highest standards of both behaviour and manners of children are adhered to at all times. Staff should be aware that bullying can take many forms and will not be tolerated. Verbal bullying can be as damaging as physical, so please be proactive and **always** respond when children report being harassed. Never ignore a child's complaint, always look into the issue. (See Management of bullying document)

Discipline of Children

Never discipline a whole class for the misbehaviour of a few. Children are relatively powerless but in the place of power they have a very refined sense of personal fairness and justice. You have probably heard children say "That's not fair, you let her/him do it so why can't I?" etc. If you are unfair to children you will lose their respect and you will never gain their confidence. The quality of your relationship with the children depends on your attitude. Think of all the teachers you have had yourself and you will find the ones you learned from and the ones you remember with fondness were the ones you respected.

- **Children must be in sight and supervised at all times.** They are not to be sent out of the classroom, out of sight of the teacher, for misbehaving. If you are taking someone's class while they are having APT you must deal with discipline breaches yourself and not send the children back to their class teacher. Use of Behaviour Buddy Classrooms is expected.
- You may make arrangements for another teacher to support you by taking a child who has temporarily exhausted your patience. (behaviour buddy class system)
- If you are to gain children's respect for your authority, always deal with issues related to behaviour.
- Seek assistance and advice from your Leading Teacher.
- Seek assistance and advice from the Principal or Assistant Principal.
- Don't punish children by having them do work that in other circumstances you would want them to enjoy, e.g. spelling or Maths.

Bullying:

Bullying is not to be tolerated. Teachers must immediately deal with all instances of verbal, emotional, and physical bullying and report instances to either the Principal or Assistant Principals. Make sure instances are logged on Compass for tracking purposes.

Please talk with your children about sensible school rules and define what bullying is and is not. Remember that there are quite a few new children in our school who won't know what is expected of them.

Rules for All Students

- If you can't say something nice about another person don't say anything at all.
- Don't do to another person what you wouldn't like to be done to you.
- Children are not allowed to leave the school ground.
- No hat no play Terms 1 and 4.
- Safety on the play equipment. Children are not to play chasey on the play equipment. Tackling games and wrestling (contact games) are not to be played. Teachers are to take their class on a tour of the school yard and outline expectations re safety on equipment. Record this in your work program. Remember to revisit these expectations each term and be mindful of new students.

- Children are to eat lunch inside (or outside) but must be under the direct supervision of their class teacher.
- Children must seek permission to return to class after they have eaten and cleaned up the space around where they were eating.
- Running around the building is not allowed due to the huge safety risks involved.
- Late Children: If children are consistently late please contact the parents and let David, Ben or Sommar know so that we can follow up if necessary. Do not reprimand students as it may be out of their control.
- Insist that children walk in class groups, moving in an orderly manner. There is to be no running within the buildings or under the covered areas.
- Leaving the school grounds is against all rules and children may only leave with a parent if written permission. Parents are required to sign their children out in the book held at the front office.
- No child may attend an excursion without written permission of the parents.
- Rudeness and any form of disrespect to staff members will not be tolerated and you must insist upon high standards of behaviour from our students. They must follow your instructions.

If you observe children breaking our rules then act immediately. Challenge the children: don't ask what they are doing if you clearly observed the action. Likewise if a child uses bad language never get them to repeat it by saying, "What did you say?" as this only gives them a legitimate excuse to repeat the offence. Immediately deal with the observed behaviour and set appropriate consequence. Never pass by any poor behaviour – always take action and apply sanction. Do this consistently and be very vigilant when on yard duty in this regard. Seek assistance if you need but don't allow any poorly behaved child to feel that they got the better of you.

**The teacher who initiates the process is responsible for completing the process.
Consequences for inappropriate behavior should ideally follow these steps:**

- **Remind**
- **Warn**
- **Act (as per flow chart)**

Consequences

Before putting consequences into place we need to use the steps of Remind and Warn. These are important steps in teaching students new behaviors because of the element of personal choice and responsibility to the student.

When a consequence is then applied for unacceptable behavior, it has been done in a **fair** way.

The student cannot lay blame or responsibility somewhere else for their own actions.

Using the steps of: **REMIND, WARN and ACT** in a consistent manner will help make the student feel more secure and also teach him/her that their actions will be followed by the same steps each time. When these steps are used consistently, we usually find that after a period of time, teachers only ever need to get to the second step ~ warning ~ before the student ceases the behavior. However, there will be occasions when you will need to follow through all three steps, particularly in the beginning. Most children will want

to 'test the system'. Where possible it is preferable at the Act stage to apply consequences that are logically linked to the misbehavior e.g.:

- **Rough games** - means play privileges are removed.
- **Throwing things around** - means time-out first to calm down then picking up the things thrown
- **Being nasty to people** - means an apology.
- **Not sharing resources** - means that student may have to go without.
- **Wasting time** - means paying it back in their own time.

Department Documentation expectations

- Incidents have been recorded – Diary and COMPASS
- Interventions and Supports investigated
- Individual Education Plans formed
- Behaviour Management Support Plan developed
- Staged response outlined
- Interventions and Supports put in place
- Explicit teaching of replacement strategies by classroom teachers/additional support
- SSG meetings held

What happens when rules are broken?

When children break school rules teachers will do all of the normal things to ensure that inappropriate behaviour stops:

- Set clear and reasonable expectations
- Acknowledge and reward the expected behaviours
- Plan for and set ability level learning tasks
- Discuss, Deflect, Diffuse
- Remind, Warn and Act
- Make contact with parents

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.

7. Engaging with families

Mildura 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.

8. Evaluation

Mildura 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

REVIEW CYCLE

This policy was last updated on September 2020 and is scheduled for review in May 2021