

# 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.

Mackellar Primary School (MPS) 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
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5. Student rights and responsibilities
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## Policy

### 1. School profile

Mackellar Primary is situated in the outer north-western suburbs of Melbourne. Its founding principal led the school continuously for almost 30 years and established what has been recognised widely as a distinguished inclusive learning environment catering to a diverse community of learners. While its school community has changed and evolved over time, inclusion is a legacy which remains as a pillar of the school. Over the past seven years the



school has seen changes in school leadership who collectively oversaw the repurposing and redesign of learning and recreational spaces, introduced and embedded 1:1 technology as key platform for future-focussed learning. In 2020, the school launched its re-imagined school vision Empowering Global Citizens after significant work with school staff, students and community, and in conjunction with staff from the University of Southern Queensland and its world renown IDEAS program. Through the school vision, our school believes that for students to be active global citizens who thrive, they require the knowledge, skills, dispositions and powerful tools which they can use to solve future challenges. This is best achieved through our school values of: Learning, Respect, Resilience and Teamwork.

Mackellar Primary School consists of a central building comprising 16 classrooms, a gymnasium, our food technology room, administration block and 'The Hive' (our digital learning space). A further building, built in an open learning plan, has six classrooms and an open area housing a school library and additional office spaces. As of 2020, the school does not offer an International Student Program, however our school does boast grounds which include multiple playgrounds, a kitchen garden, two basketball/netball courts and all-weather athletics track and oval allowing for a range of curricula and extra-curricular programs to be run. Throughout 2020 and 2021, the school has commenced a major refurbishment which has seen two new playgrounds installed, new staff toilets, carpeting, student furniture replacement, extensive landscaping and exterior painting to existing demountable buildings.

In 2021, funding was provided for 383 students, of which three identify as being Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander. The school's Student Family Occupation (SFO) index was 0.6059 and its Student Family Occupation Education index (SFOE) 0.5013, which is the same as our 2020 indices of 0.60 and 0.50 respectively. The staffing profile at Mackellar Primary School in 2021 was significantly less than previous years having commenced an Excess Staffing process late in 2020. In 2021 our staffing profile included 29.81 EFT Education Support staff, 31.80 EFT Classroom Teachers, 2.0 Learning Specialists and 2.0 EFT Principal Class Employees. None of the staff present in 2021 identify as being Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander. At the end of term one 2021, the substantive assistant principal secured a position at a different setting and an acting assistant principal was appointed for the remainder of the 2021 school year. From then, the leadership team comprised the principal, acting assistant principal, business manager, one learning specialist and one acting learning specialist.

The Hive is our digital learning space for which Mackellar is well renowned. In this space students explore science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) with this being run by classroom teachers. In addition, students undertake Physical Education, Languages (Italian), Food Technology, Performing Arts and Visual Arts as specialist subjects. Mackellar has a high proportion of students on the Program for Students with a Disability (PSD). These students are supported by a full-time Inclusion Coordinator who ensures all students on the PSD have up to date Individual Learning Plans and regular Student Support Group meetings, as well as coordinating external allied health staff. In addition, a highly trained Education Support workforce, provide a range of assistance designed specifically for students individual needs.

## **2. School values, philosophy and vision**

Mackellar Primary School's vision is Empowering Global Citizens. Our Statement of Values and School Philosophy is integral to the functioning of the school and the foundation of our school community. The School-wide Positive Behaviour Support (SWPBS) framework supports our school community to foster a positive school climate, a culture of student competence and an open, responsive management system for school leaders, staff, students and parents/carers. SWPBS includes intervention practices and



organisational systems for establishing positive school cultures, learning and teaching environments and the individual behaviour supports needed to achieve academic and social success for all students.

Mackellar Primary School is committed to the eSmart School's framework, to foster 'safe, smart and responsible' use of technology. Wellbeing discourse is echoed in our vibrant community, with mindfulness, empathy and expressions of gratitude having come to life through The Resilience Project. As a Resilience, Rights and Respectful Relationships (RRRR) Lead School, the school's ongoing commitment is reflected in a strong social and emotional learning curriculum and positive school culture. Mackellar Primary School's commitment to the Be You School's framework for mental health is strongly linked to Child Safe Standard policies. We also empower students through student agency, student voice and student leadership.

## **Mackellar Primary School Statement of Values**

### Promoting healthy, safe and respectful school communities

Mackellar Primary School recognises the importance of the partnership between schools and parents to support student learning, engagement and wellbeing. We share a commitment to, and a responsibility for, ensuring inclusive, safe and orderly environments for children and young people.

Our Statement of Values sets out our behavioural expectations of all members in the school community, including the principal, all school staff, parents, students and visitors. It respects the diversity of individuals in our school community and addresses the shared responsibilities of all members in building safe and respectful school communities. Discrimination, sexual and other forms of harassment, bullying, violence, aggression and threatening behaviour are unacceptable and will not be tolerated in this school. Our Statement of Values acknowledges that parents and school staff are strongly motivated to do their best for every child. Everyone has the right to differing opinions and views and to raise concerns, as long as we do this respectfully as a community working together.

## **Responsibilities**

### As principals and school leaders, we will:

- work collaboratively to create a school environment where respectful and safe conduct is expected of everyone
- behave in a manner consistent with the standards of our profession and meet core responsibilities to provide inclusive, safe and orderly environment
- plan, implement and monitor arrangements to ensure the care, safety, security and general wellbeing of all students in attendance at the school is protected
- identify and support students who are or may be at risk
- do our best to ensure every child achieves their personal and learning potential
- work with parents to understand their child's needs and, where necessary, adapt the learning environment accordingly
- respond appropriately when inclusive, safe or orderly behaviour is not demonstrated and implement appropriate interventions and sanctions when required
- make known to parents the school's communication and complaints procedures
- ask any person who is acting in an offensive or disorderly way to leave the school grounds.



As teachers and all non-teaching staff, we will:

- model positive behaviour to students consistent with the standards of our profession
- proactively engage with parents about student outcomes
- work with parents to understand the needs of each student and, where necessary, adapt the learning environment accordingly
- work collaboratively with parents to improve learning and wellbeing outcomes for students with additional needs
- communicate with the principal and school leaders in the event we anticipate or face any tension or challenging behaviours from parents
- treat all members of the school community with respect.

As parents, we will:

- model positive behaviour to our child
- ensure our child attends school on time, every day the school is open for instruction
- take an interest in our child's school and learning
- work with the school to achieve the best outcomes for our child
- communicate constructively with the school and use expected processes and protocols when raising concerns
- support school staff to maintain a safe learning environment for all students
- follow the school's complaints processes if there are complaints
- treat all school leaders, staff, students, and other members of the school community with respect.

As students, we will:

- model positive behaviour to other students
- comply with and model school values
- behave in a safe and responsible manner
- respect ourselves, other members of the school community and the school environment
- actively participate in school
- not disrupt the learning of others and make the most of our educational opportunities.

### **3. Wellbeing and engagement strategies**

Mackellar Primary School has developed a range of strategies to promote engagement, an inclusive, safe environment, positive behaviour and respectful relationships for all students in our school. We recognise the importance of student friendships and peer support in helping children and students feel safe and less isolated. 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.

Mackellar Primary School utilises the School-wide Positive Behaviour Support Intervention Framework, a multi-tiered system of support, to provide three levels of support (as detailed):

- Tier 1 Primary Prevention: (Universal, school-wide support for all students, staff and parents/carers)
- Tier 2 Secondary Prevention: Targeted Preventions
- Tier 3 Tertiary Prevention: Individual Interventions



Tier 1 Primary Prevention: (Universal, school-wide support for all students, staff and parents/carers)

- 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 and that embraces and celebrates diversity and empowers all students to participate and feel valued
- 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 special areas; Food Technology, Language (Italian), Performing Arts, Visual Arts, Physical Education and Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) at Mackellar's Hive
- teachers at MPS use instructional frameworks 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 MPS 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, School Philosophy and School Vision 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 opportunities to contribute to and provide feedback on decisions about school operations through the Student Representative Council and other forums including focus groups. Students are also encouraged to speak with their teachers, Assistant Principal and Principal whenever they have any questions or concerns
- create opportunities for cross—age connections amongst students through the school's Junior School Council, Clubs Program, Better Buddy Program, Athletics Carnival, music program and whole school events and celebrations such as Carnevale
- all students are welcome to self-refer to the Mental Health and Wellbeing Leader, Assistant Principal or 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
- we explicitly teach social and emotional learning through Resilience, Rights and Respectful



Relationships (and have a lead school role within the South-Western Region)

- we engage in Bully-stoppers programs and eSmart Schools
- programs developed to address issue specific behaviour (i.e., anger management programs)
- opportunities for student inclusion (i.e., whole school incursions, buddies, sports teams, house teams, clubs, recess and lunchtime activities)
- measures are in place to empower our school community to identify, report and address inappropriate and harmful behaviours such as racism, homophobia and other forms of discrimination or harassment.

### Tier 2 Secondary Prevention: Targeted Preventions

- Koorie students are supported to engage fully in their education, in a positive learning environment that understands and appreciates the strength of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture – refer to our Aboriginal Learning, Wellbeing and Safety Action Plan for further information
- our English as a second language students are supported through our EAL program, and all cultural and linguistically diverse students are supported to feel safe and included in our school by respecting the uniqueness of each family system, developing positive relationships with families and communicating in culturally appropriate ways
- we support learning and wellbeing outcomes of students from refugee background through consultation with families and where required, student support groups and individual education plans
- we provide a positive and respectful learning environment for our students who identify as LGBTIQ+ and follow the Department's policy on LGBTIQ Student Support
- 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 Learning Plan and a Student Support Group (SSG) and being referred to Student Support Services for an Educational Needs Assessment
- wellbeing and health staff 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 apply a trauma-informed approach to working with students who have experienced trauma
- 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.

### Tier 3 Tertiary Prevention: Individual Interventions

Mackellar 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:
  - Mental Health and Wellbeing Leader or the Inclusion Leading Teacher for school-based wellbeing supports
  - Student Support Services
  - appropriate external supports such as council-based youth and family services, other allied health professionals, child and adolescent mental health services or Orange Door

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
- engaging with our regional Koorie Engagement Officers
- 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

Specific links include:

- [Student Support Groups](#)
- [Individual Education Plans](#)
- [Behaviour - Students](#)
- [Behaviour Support Plans](#)
- [Student Support Services](#)

As well as other Department programs and services such as:

- [Program for Students with Disabilities](#)
- [LOOKOUT](#)

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

Mackellar Primary School is committed to providing the necessary support to ensure that our students are supported intellectually, emotionally and socially. The Student Wellbeing and Inclusion team play a significant role in developing and implementing strategies help identify students in need of support and enhance student wellbeing. Mackellar 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
- referral pathways.

## 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:

- model positive behaviour to other students
- comply with and model school values
- display positive behaviours that demonstrate respect for themselves, their peers, their teachers and members of the school community
- actively participate in school
- respect the right of others to learn and make the most of educational opportunities.

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, Student Wellbeing and Inclusion Leading 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

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 Mackellar Primary School's Bullying policy.

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

- 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 Mental Health and Wellbeing Leader, Assistant Principal or Principal
- restorative practices
- detentions
- behaviour reviews
- suspension
- expulsion.

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.

Suspension and expulsion are measures of last resort and may only be used in particular 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>

The Principal of Mackellar 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.

## 7. Engaging with families

Mackellar Primary School values the interaction and participation 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 create successful partnerships with parents and carers by:

- encouraging parents to become involved in school events and formal parent groups such as the School Council and Parent Education sessions
- 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
- respond to parent feedback through surveys to make school improvements
- providing parent volunteer opportunities so that families can contribute to school activities
- involving families with homework and other curriculum-related activities



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- 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
- providing feedback to parents through information evenings, written reports, student support groups and parent/carer interviews with teachers about student learning, behaviour and wellbeing
- providing interpreters and translations for non-English speaking families.

The importance of student pathways is forged through an intensive Prep transition program with ongoing links with local kindergartens. Close links have been established with local secondary schools supporting student transition to Year 7.

## 8. Evaluation

Mackellar 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 data
- attendance data
- case management
- CASES21
- SOCS

## 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 the school newsletter
- Made available in hard copy from school administration upon request.

## 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 Department of Education and Training policies are relevant to this Student and Engagement and Wellbeing Policy:

- Attendance
- Student Engagement
- Child Safe Standards
- Supporting Students in Out-of-Home Care
- Students with a 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
- Statement of Values and School Philosophy
- Attendance Policy
- Digital Learning Policy
- Duty of Care Policy

### Policy Review and Approval

Policy last reviewed	November 9th 2022
Consultation	School Council Education Sub-Committee Student Wellbeing and Respectful Relationships Committee Junior School Council
Approved by	Principal
Next scheduled review date	November 9 <sup>th</sup> 2024 (2 years)

