



# MEREDITH

## Primary School

Wallace St, Meredith, 3333  
P: 52861313 E: meredith.ps@education.vic.gov.au  
W: www.meredithps.vic.edu.au



## 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.

Meredith 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
5. Student rights and responsibilities
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### POLICY

#### 1. School profile

We are a small country school located halfway between Geelong and Ballarat. Our motto is Achieving Together. At Meredith Primary School we provide our children with an innovative learning environment and a caring, nurturing approach to student well-being. We are a rural school with excellent facilities and stimulating grounds that provide many options for



**RESPECT**



**RESILIENCE**



**PRIDE**



**EXCELLENCE**

students. The students take an active role in maintaining various areas within the school grounds such as our wicking garden beds and veggie gardens. The curriculum is based on the Victorian Curriculum Foundation – Year 10. We ensure that our curriculum is delivered to students in a meaningful and relevant way and that it captures their interests and is personalised to meet individual needs. Coverage of all learning areas is important, with emphasis on the core areas of English and Mathematics. We run a variety of alternative programs to support the learning of all students. We have staff trained in both MiniLit and MultiLit to support literacy development. We also have a number of staff who run weekly extension groups in both literacy and numeracy. In recent years, Meredith Primary School has heavily invested into digital learning as this is a significant part of the world we live in today. Currently each junior grade has access to their own group set of iPads. We also have 1:1 netbooks for year 2 – 6 and a personal device allocation for each of these students. With a focus on using our technologies for creative purposes, we are now able to allow students to create things that wouldn't have been possible in the past such as digital books, movies and animations. We understand that our students are growing up in the 21st century and we aim to give them a curriculum that is appropriate for the needs of the digital age. We aim for all of our students to leave us with highly competent ICT skills and a creative and inquisitive mind. We have a comprehensive Arts (Visual and performing) Program, Physical Education, Science, Technology, Engineering & Maths (STEM) Program and LOTE for our older students. We have an exciting and extensive camp program. As part of the Moorabool Valley Association, we join with Lethbridge, Shelford, Inverleigh, Anakie Primary Schools for our Years 3 to 6 Camps Programs

## 2. School values, philosophy and vision

### School Mission

Our motto, 'Achieving together' is promoted in the following ways:

- We provide a happy, caring and safe environment that promotes an enthusiasm for life-long learning; maximising and celebrating individual and collective achievement.
- We create a learning environment where students are encouraged to work cooperatively with others.
- We encourage children to respect one another by valuing diversity within the school and the wider community.
- Our educational practices are evidence based and aim to engage each child in a culturally rich, challenging and contemporary curriculum.
- We value the use of innovative tools for our children's' learning in a dynamic and technological world.
- We promote strong home-school partnerships, and seek ways to involve, and be involved in, the wider community.
- We strive to have a school that is inclusive, welcoming and supportive of all children's learning.

### School Values

At the end of 2018 we engaged in a community consultative process to establish new school values that not only the school felt important, but also the wider Meredith community. The four values that were decided on were:

-  Respect
-  Resilience



 Excellence

 Pride

Over the 2019 school year our staff, students and community established a clear and consistent understanding of what these values look like in action in the classrooms, in the playground and in the community. In 2020 we continue to support and uphold these values through our learning journey. These values support the foundation of the focus on the learning and development of every student so they will be;

- Resilient learners
- Responsible citizens
- Creative thinkers and
- Reflective, well-developed individuals

The school shares the universal values that:

- Every member of the school community has a right to fully participate in an educational environment that is safe, supportive and inclusive
- Everyone deserves to be treated with respect and dignity.

### 3. Wellbeing and engagement strategies

The 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

- prioritising 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
- using an instructional framework to ensure an explicit, common and shared model of instruction ensuring evidenced-based, high yield teaching practices are incorporated into all lessons
- adopting 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
- incorporating our values into our curriculum and promoted to students, staff and parent/carers so that they are shared and celebrated as the foundation of our school community
- carefully planned transition programs to support students moving into different stages of their schooling
- positive behaviour and student achievement is acknowledged in the classroom, and formally in school assemblies and communication to parents



- monitor student attendance and implement attendance improvement strategies at a whole-school, cohort and individual level
- students have the opportunity to contribute to and provide feedback on decisions about school operations through the Student Representative Council and other forums including year group meetings and Peer Support Groups. Students are also encouraged to speak with their teachers, Year Level Coordinator, Assistant Principal and Principal whenever they have any questions or concerns.
- creating opportunities for cross—age connections amongst students through school concerts, athletics, music programs and peer support programs
- encouraging students to self-refer to the Student Wellbeing Coordinator, School Nurse, 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
- engaging in school wide positive behaviour support with our staff and students, which includes programs such as:
  - Respectful Relationships
  - Bully Stoppers
  - Safe Schools
- programs, incursions and excursions developed to address issue specific behaviour (i.e. anger management programs)
- opportunities for student inclusion (i.e. sports teams, lunchtime activities)
- buddy programs, peer support programs

#### Targeted

- each year group has a Team Leader, a senior teacher responsible for their year, who monitor 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
- staff will apply a trauma-informed approach to working with students who have experienced trauma

#### Individual

- Student Support Groups
- Individual Learning Plan and Behaviour Support Plan
- Program for Students with Disabilities • referral to Student Welfare Coordinator and Student Support Services
- referral to ChildFirst, Headspace
- Navigator
- Lookout

The 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

*Meredith 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. We 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*
- *suspension data (if applicable)*
- *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, racism, 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. Further information about raising a complaint or concern is available in our Complaints Policy.

## 6. Student behavioural expectations and management

*Behavioural expectations of students are grounded in our school's Statement of Values/Student code of conduct.*

*Violence, bullying, and other offensive and harmful behaviours such as racism, harassment and discrimination will not be tolerated and will be managed in accordance with this policy. Bullying will be managed in accordance with our Bullying Prevention Policy.*

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

- 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*
- *restorative practices*
- *behaviour support and intervention meetings*
- *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 Meredith 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.

## 7. Engaging with families

Meredith 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

Meredith 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, including attendance and absence data
- SOCS

Meredith 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 <http://www.meredithps.vic.edu.au/>

- 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:

- 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	8/6/2022
Consultation	15/6/2022 – School Council
Approved by	Principal
Next scheduled review date	June 2024



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