

STUDENT WELLBEING AND ENGAGEMENT POLICY

2023- 25



HELP FOR NON-ENGLISH SPEAKERS

If you need help to understand the information in this policy, please contact Mill Park Heights Primary School on 03 9436 8866 or mill.park.heights.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.

Mill Park Heights 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.

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POLICY

1. School profile

Mill Park Heights Primary School was established in 1992 and is located in Melbourne's northern suburbs. The school comprised of total of 54.1 staff. This included 2.0 EFT Principal Class, 36.9 EFT Teaching staff and 15.2 ES staff. A total of 680 students were enrolled at the school in 2023; 350 female and 330 male. 29 percent of students had English as an additional language and 3 percent were Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander. The overall school's socio-economic profile is based on the school's Student Family Occupation and Education index (SFOE). Mill Park Height's SFOE band value is: Medium.

The main permanent building houses administration and staff facilities, staff lounge, senior art room, ICT Lab library and fourteen general-purpose classrooms. Additional permanent buildings, include the Foundation building attached

to the main gymnasium, canteen and Community Hub and the Year 1 and Year 2 Learning Centres. The Community Hub caters for our Out of School Care Program run by CAMP Australia. MPHPS works in partnership with Camp Australia to provide families with before/after school, Curriculum Day care and vacation care. Two brand new permanent buildings built in 2017 now accommodate the Year 1 & 2 cohort. These buildings also house our school Chaplain, Tutoring and Intervention teams and the Language Support program. The Year 3 & 4 cohorts are accommodated in modern new and refurbished relocatables that include six classrooms in each building, collaboration galleries, wet areas and kitchen facilities. The Year 5 and 6 cohorts are located in the main building with two Year 5 classes located in two permanent classrooms built in 2017. The Language room is in a modern relocatable next to our staff conference room. Our double VIP (very important person) portable that provides respite and space for students who feel overwhelmed in the yard. This important program is run by our Student Support Staff and provides students with the opportunity to collaborate with others in a supported space. We have an Arts precinct that accommodates Junior and Senior Performing Arts. These buildings are of the relocatable type. The Senior Visual Arts room is located in the main building with the Junior Arts space being housed in the Foundation building.

There are a number of play spaces for students including three adventure playgrounds, 2 basketball/netball courts and an oval. The school has established a strong commitment to developing a sustainability culture with an urban forest, vegetable, sensory garden and a collaborative space known as a Yarning Circle. This has had an impact of how we manage our waste at MPHPS both within classrooms and in the playground.

The learning environment at MPHPS is defined as respectful, supportive, calm and safe. Student leadership and voice is a priority and students are given the opportunity to share and celebrate their learning at year level and whole school assemblies. Students are given the opportunity to participate in student-leadership initiatives/partnership involving attendance at the GRIP Leadership Conference, Lalor North SC Music Night, Belgravia Whittlesea and the local council. Specialist programs include The Arts, Language (Auslan) and Physical Education/Sport and some Extension Programs as part of the Victorian High Ability Program, including Science with Dr Don, when onsite.

2. School values, philosophy and vision

Mill Park Heights Primary School's values underpin our learning, teaching and social interactions. We strive to model our values in all areas of our school life and the values are the cornerstone of each Class Code of Co-operation whether onsite or via remote learning. The MPHPS Values are - Honesty and Trust - Respect - Responsibility - Care and Compassion - Team Work - Personal Best.

Our MPHPS mission is to ensure high quality Instruction that maximises the individual potential and growth of all students.

Our vision is for our students will be critical and creative thinkers who are resilient and valuable contributors to a global society graduate students to be lifelong learners who are resilient problem solvers and valuable contributors to a global society.

At MPHPS, our core beliefs about how students learn drive everything we do in all aspects of school life and are the determining factor in decision-making. Our beliefs are:

- Children bring with them their own beliefs, knowledge and experiences that we value and build upon.
- Children learn best through interactions, active exploration using all of their senses and experimentation.
- Children learn best when the intention and expectations for learning are clearly articulated.
- Children learn best when they can articulate, reflect upon, review, and represent their learning in different ways.
- Children's positive dispositions to learning and to themselves as learners are essential for success in school and beyond. (Readiness to learn) They need to be given the time to develop their school readiness.
- Children learn best when there is a place for creativity, imagination and self-expression in learning.
- Children learn best when assessment is used to evaluate and inform teaching and learning.
- Children learn best when there are supportive relationships among all partners (including peers) in the learning community.
- Children learn best when their learning is structured to ensure continuity of learning as they children move to and through school ensuring foundations for their future success. Every minute counts.

3. Wellbeing and engagement strategies

Mill Park Heights Primary School has developed a range of strategies to promote engagement, an inclusive and 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. Our Respectful Relationships program, supported by our school values underpin the strategies we use to promote wellbeing and engagement.

At Mill Park Heights Primary School we :

- Have 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
- create a culture that is inclusive, engaging and supportive and that embraces and celebrates diversity and empowers all students to participate and feel valued
- welcome all parents/carers and being responsive to them as partners in learning
- analyse 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
- follow the Victorian Pedagogical Model and the Workshop 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
- 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's Statement of Values and School Philosophy into our curriculum and promote to students, staff and parents so that they are shared and celebrated as the foundation of our school community
- carefully plan transition programs to support students moving into different stages of their schooling
- acknowledge positive behaviour and student achievement 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
- provide students with 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, Assistant Principal and Principal whenever they have any questions or concerns.
- create opportunities for connections amongst students
- create safe spaces for all students to access 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 our Respectful Relationships programs
- provide opportunities for student inclusion
- empower our school community to identify, report and address inappropriate and harmful behaviours such as racism, homophobia and other forms of discrimination or harassment.

Targeted Strategies

- each year group has a Welfare, wellbeing and agency 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
- 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.

- our English as a second language students are supported through our classroom EAL support, and all cultural and linguistically diverse students are supported to feel safe and included in our school
- we support learning and wellbeing outcomes of students from refugee background
- we provide a positive and respectful learning environment for our students who identify as LGBTQ+ and follow the Department's policy on [LGBTIQ Student Support \[insert any specific measures at your school to support LGBTQ+ students\]](#)
- 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
- 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
- welfare, wellbeing and agency staff along with relevant learning specialists and principal class, 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
- students enrolled under the Department's international student program are supported in accordance with our legal obligations and Department policy and guidelines at: [International Student Program](#)

Individual Strategies

Mill Park Heights 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

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 Support Officers
- running regular Student Support Group meetings for all students:
 - with a disability
 - in Out of Home Care
 - with other complex needs that require ongoing support and monitoring.

4. Identifying students in need of support

Mill Park Heights 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. Mill Park Heights 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. While our school values highlights the rights and responsibilities of members of our community, we also strongly believe :

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, Mill Park Heights Primary 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
- referral to the Welfare, wellbeing and agency representative within the year level
- restorative practices
- withdrawal of yard privilege
- 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 Mill Park Heights 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

Mill Park Heights 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

Mill Park Heights 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

Mill Park Heights 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 can be found on the DET website and 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

POLICY REVIEW AND APPROVAL

Policy last reviewed	September 11th, 2023
Consultation	Child Safe Officer, SIT, Principal Team, School Council
Approved by	Principal
Next scheduled review date	September 2025