

# MPS STUDENT WELLBEING AND ENGAGEMENT POLICY



## Help for non-English speakers

If you need help to understand the information in this policy, please contact Mentone Primary School on 9583 2995 or [mentone.ps@education.vic.gov.au](mailto:mentone.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.

Mentone 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

Mentone Primary School (MPS) is situated in the beach-side suburb of Mentone, 23 kilometers from the city of Melbourne within the local government area of the City of Kingston. With continued energy

and enthusiasm, we support the social, emotional, and learning needs of students from a diverse range of social and cultural backgrounds with 17 percent English as an Additional Language (EAL) and 1 percent of students identifying as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander. The school's Student Family Occupation and Education index (SFOE) is low at 0.18 representing a low level of socio-educational disadvantage. Staff across the school range from greatly experienced, with many years at MPS and some from previous schools to new graduate teachers. In 2021 we had 38 staff in total, 28 teaching staff, (Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) 26) and 10 nonteaching staff, (FTE 6.84). In 2021, 29 percent of staff were male and 71 percent female with no staff identifying as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islanders.

### School values, philosophy and vision

Mentone Primary School's agreed values; Honesty, Care and Compassion, Respect, Teamwork and Friendliness underpin our vision and mission statement; 'At Mentone Primary School, our relationships are important, our learning is powerful and we are curious, creative and confident.' As such, we share high expectations of our professional practice, we work together as a community of practice and purposely aim to continually improve to enable all of our students to be inspired to thrive and develop emotionally and academically throughout their school years with us. We are collectively committed to this purpose in the knowledge that our students will take their skills and knowledge with them into the future to become inclusive, valuable, resourceful, contributing members of society. At Mentone PS our whole school wellbeing approach, Restorative Justice Practices (RJP), coupled with our embedded whole school pedagogical approach, Curiosity and Powerful Learning, provide a strong learning improvement framework and form the cornerstone of our school's positive, relational identity. We demonstrate and model our values and our restorative approach by; participating in daily relational circles, using consistent, non-judgemental and inclusive shared language with which to address wellbeing and learning issues, building and strengthening class/year level community through reciprocally respectful relationships and empowering student voice and agency and encouraging ownership of behaviours and self-awareness. During the course of the current strategic timeline, we have remained committed to embedding the continuous improvement program Curiosity and Powerful Learning (CPL). Our commitment to this program has enabled Mentone PS leadership and teaching staff to realise our shared objective to reduce teacher variability and improve teacher precision and practice, and in doing so, enable students to build their learner confidence, engagement, curiosity and ultimately their achievement. Consistent resourcing of time and funding is prioritised to CPL professional learning and development, and this has resulted in our ability to embed the related whole school and teacher theories of action resulting in clarity around our instructional model, whilst significantly strengthening our team approach and enabling development of innovative and engaging flexible learning programs at all year levels. As such, we were well placed to accelerate engagement with the Victorian Government's Framework for Improving Students Outcomes (FISO) and subsequent improvement strategies such as the High Impact Teaching Strategies (HITS) and Practice Principles which relate directly to our CPL program. Over the past 4 years we have focused on building leadership capacity and have devolved our leadership team considerably enabling all staff to contribute directly to school improvement. Our School Leadership Improvement Team meet weekly to drive the strategic direction of the school with emphasis on whole school improvement through collaborative, evidence-based, professional learning and teamwork. We meet as a whole staff weekly on Wednesdays to focus adult learning on improvement strategies with teams following up practical application of whole staff learning in Pedagogy and Practice meetings on Monday afternoons. Our high functioning teams, frame-worked by agreed operational protocols, work collectively and collaboratively to design, develop and refine instructional and flexible learning experiences to meet and challenge individual student needs. Learners participate in a diverse range of Literacy and Numeracy programs supporting the improvement of individual student's levels of achievement,

alongside quality learning experiences delivered through a variety of integrated, play-based and inquiry approaches across all curriculum areas promoting growth mindset, practical application and problem solving, independence and a love of learning. The classroom curriculum is enhanced through specialist programs consisting of Visual Arts, Performing Arts, Physical Education, Science and Library studies. In addition, the school has a strong focus on sustainability, connecting with our community and student leadership, enabling students to become environmentally aware and socially conscious citizens. We have a strong commitment to the development and integration of a variety technologies across the school curriculum providing excellent access at every level to flexible use of devices to complement learning programs.

*Our Statement of Values is available online at:*

[https://www.mentoneps.vic.edu.au/source/BUILD/2021-Statement-of-values-and-school-philosophy-policy%20\(1\).pdf](https://www.mentoneps.vic.edu.au/source/BUILD/2021-Statement-of-values-and-school-philosophy-policy%20(1).pdf)

## 2. Wellbeing and engagement strategies

Mentone 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 school provides students with a broad range of excellent learning programs designed, developed and evaluated consistently by leadership and the staff professional learning teams within the school. Staff work collectively and collaboratively in Professional Learning Teams (PLTs) to design, develop and refine exciting and flexible-learning experiences created to meet individual needs and challenge all students. We have a diverse range of programs support improving individual student's levels of achievement in Literacy and Numeracy, alongside quality learning programs delivered through an integrated and inquiry approach to learning in all other curriculum areas. The school curriculum is enhanced through specialist program consisting of Visual Arts, Performing Arts, Physical Education and Library studies. In addition, the school has a strong focus on sustainability and student leadership enabling students to become environmentally aware and socially competent. There is a strong commitment to the development and integration of technologies across the school curriculum providing excellent access at every level to flexible use of devices to complement learning programs.

At **Mentone Primary School** we share high expectations of professional practice, and we aim to create an environment in which our students will thrive and develop emotionally and academically throughout their school years and take these skills with them into the future to become confident, valuable, resourceful, contributing members of society. The student wellbeing programs, strongly frame-worked by **Restorative Justice Philosophy (RJP)** and **Relational Learning practices**, form a significant cornerstone of our school's positive identity and support consistent modelling of the agreed values of **Honesty, Care and Compassion, Respect, Teamwork and Friendliness**. Teaching the whole child and developing strong authentic relationships across all levels of the school community underpins the school's future vision to inspire **curiosity, confidence and creativity**.

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 Mentone Primary School use an Curiosity and Powerful Learning 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 Mentone 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 and BMOA 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 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.
- create opportunities for cross—age connections amongst students through the Buddies program, house athletics, multi-age year levels, assemblies and workshops.
- All students are welcome to self-refer to the Student Wellbeing Coordinator/School Chaplain, Year Level 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:
  - 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, choir, Sustainability Club, Coding Club, recess and lunchtime activities)
- buddy programs
- 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.

## Targeted

- each year group has a Year Group Leader/Coordinator, 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
- 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 EAL program, 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 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
- 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
- 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
- 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

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

as well as to other Department programs and services such as:

- [Program for Students with Disabilities](#)
- [Mental health toolkit](#)
- [headspace](#)
- [LOOKOUT](#)

**Mentone 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
  - and with other complex needs that require ongoing support and monitoring.

### 3. Identifying students in need of support

Mentone Primary School is committed to providing the necessary support to ensure our students are supported intellectually, emotionally and socially. Classroom teachers, PLTs, the Student Wellbeing team, Wellbeing Coordinator and Principal Class all play a significant role in developing and implementing strategies help identify students in need of support and enhance student wellbeing. Mentone 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 and suspension data
- engagement with families
- self-referrals or referrals from peers

#### 4. 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. Further information about raising a complaint or concern is available in our Complaints Policy.

#### 5. Student behavioural expectations and management

Our Vision is to develop, in partnership with the whole community, an effective caring and dynamic learning community. That learning community is founded on an educational philosophy centred on the child and grounded in the belief that all students can learn and all students have a right to become effective learners. We are educating our students to thrive and contribute to the world of the future. Our model has as its core the essential elements for learning: explicit teaching, inquiry, collaboration, cooperation, self-responsibility and personal development in an environment of support. Increasingly, through the use of self-evaluation, student selection of units and topics pertinent to learning and triangular interviews, students are taking more responsibility for their own learning.

- Our classes will develop, through a process of consultation, a Student Code of Cooperation which outlines, amongst other things, agreed behavioural development and management strategies
- Our Code of Cooperation will place significant emphasis on the development and recognition of positive behaviours
- All students will develop individual learning plans that include behavioural goals. Student individual academic reports will include details regarding student behavioural achievement
- We will provide a wide range of positive extra-curricular activities for students including sporting, drama, leadership, community service and appropriate leisure pursuits
- Positive student behavioural achievement will be appropriately recognised
- An up to date database of student behaviour will be maintained
- All staff will undertake professional development on student behaviour and discipline management
- The school curriculum will include units on resilience, peer pressure, positive choices, bullying, conflict resolution and leadership

- Students experiencing difficulty achieving positive behavioural outcomes will undertake individualised behaviour management programs focussing upon agreed goals
- Consequences for ongoing inappropriate behaviour will involve a graded series of sanctions including counselling, withdrawal and loss of privileges or suspension
- Parents will be kept informed and actively encouraged to assist in the development of their child’s behavioural performance.

**Restorative Justice Practices and School-wide Positive Behaviour Support**

At Mentone Primary School we work together as a whole school community to create a safe and supportive school culture using Relational Circles and Restorative Practices as the basis for our relationships and behavioural management.

*Restorative Justice Practices* encourage engagement, self-responsibility and independence and to build pride and respect in each individual student. This has been extended to the classroom and is the basis for respectful communication, relationships and how to respond pro-actively to behavioural issues. Our School Wellbeing Team oversees the implementation of RJP School wide. It has run forums for parents, and along with the SRC analyses data from various sources pertaining to Student Engagement and Wellbeing and makes recommendations to the school leadership team.

The fundamental concepts of Restorative Justice Practices include an understanding of the violation of people and relationships, resultant obligations and liabilities, and restorative justice, to heal and put things right. These fundamental concepts have ‘the relationship’ and ‘putting it right’ at its core. Restorative Justice Practice is based on an old common sense understanding of wrongdoing and the underlying need in all of us to be connected. Wrongdoing is the damage to the connection, and restorative justice seeks to understand, make amends and put things right. The healing of the relationship invariably concerns all those connected to or affected by the wrongdoing thus allowing everyone to begin their “journey to belonging.”

**How we support positive behaviour and relationships**

Mentone Primary School encourages the active involvement of parents in the learning and wellbeing of each student. It seeks to foster this cooperative approach with parents through pastoral care interviews, newsletters, educational forums, Parent Teacher Interviews, Triangle Interviews, phone calls and meetings.

In encouraging and building this cooperative approach it is acknowledged there will be behaviours and events which occur that compromise this ideal. When this occurs Mentone Primary School will use a Restorative Justice approach to repair relationships between individuals and groups. Where appropriate Mentone Primary School will inform and involve parents in these processes. The following restorative approach will be used.

**A restorative practice question approach is built upon the following key questions:**

<b>When things go wrong</b>	<b>When someone has been hurt</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What happened?</li> <li>• What were you thinking at the time?</li> <li>• What have you thought about since?</li> <li>• Who has been affected by what you have done? In what way?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What did you think when you realised what had happened?</li> <li>• What impact has this incident had on you and others?</li> <li>• What has been the hardest thing for you?</li> </ul>



- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What do you think you need to do to make things right?</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What do you think needs to happen to make things right?</li> </ul> |
|--|---|



### A Staged response

- This approach will be conducted in an informal way for minor incidents and be embedded in classroom learning and teaching.
- Serious incidents will require a more formal restorative session that may involve the Principal, Assistant Principal, Student Wellbeing Leader, Chaplain and if necessary, the Guidance Officer and all persons affected in the incident. The response will be documented.
- Any imposed consequence will be imbedded in the restorative process that requires a response 'that makes things right' in relation to those who have been affected.
- Where a restorative approach has previously been conducted and subsequently the behaviour continues, the school will devise strategies and approaches to address the behaviour. This may include intervention from specialist services and external agencies in the local community and the completion of an Individual Behaviour Management Plan.
- **Corporal punishment is not permitted at the school.**

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 Mentone 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 circumstances at our school.

### 6. Engaging with families

Mentone 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.

## 7. Evaluation

Mentone 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
- incident data
- school reports
- parent survey
- case management
- CASES21, including attendance and absence data
- SOCS

Mentone 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 and Compass
- 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	23/6/2022
Consultation	School Council, Newsletter
Approved by	Principal
Next scheduled review date	23/6/2024