MACARTHUR STREET PRIMARY SCHOOL

STUDENT WELLBEING AND ENGAGEMENT POLICY

Help for non-English speakers

If you need help to understand the information in this policy, please contact Macarthur Street Primary School.

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.

Macarthur Street Primary School is committed to providing a safe, secure and stimulating learning environment for all students. We understand that students reach their full potential only when they are happy, healthy and safe, and that a positive school culture helps to engage students and support them in their learning. Our school acknowledges that student wellbeing and student learning outcomes are closely linked.

The objective of this policy is to support our school to create and maintain a safe, supportive and inclusive school environment consistent with our school's values.

SCOPE

This policy applies to all school activities, including camps and excursions.

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POLICY

1. School profile

Macarthur Street Primary School has a long and proud tradition of providing high quality education for the children of its community. Built in 1878 just north of the central business district, Macarthur Street Primary School is an imposing building of red brick and bluestone construction. Enrolment remaining steady with 70 – 100 students enrolled over the past few years.

Macarthur Street Primary School is a school in which every child is valued, their wellbeing fully nurtured and academic potential realised. The school's aims are for its students to:

- achieve their personal best in literacy and numeracy
- value friendships and can share
- be persistent learners who take risks and value effort
- develop social skills and life skills (including emotional intelligence) that enable them to manage effectively in their world
- have respect for themselves and others

- understand and develop their special talents
- develop the capacity to act responsibly, accept accountability and make good choices
- be resilient
- enjoy learning and embrace challenges

2. School values, philosophy and vision

Macarthur Street Primary School's mission is to realise its aims by ensuring that learning and teaching practices offer:

- opportunities for all students to achieve their full potential including meeting the needs of diverse learners
- the development of all students' special talents
- a broad and challenging curriculum that is built on a strong framework of knowledge
- opportunities for all students to develop social and life skills including the ability to communicate effectively in a variety of forums, to act responsibly, accept accountability and value and show respect for self and others
- a learning culture and disposition for learning where persistence, enjoyment, risk taking and challenging the learner to achieve personal excellence are evident features
- opportunities for students to work in a social context and to develop resilient behaviours
- the ongoing development of skills and knowledge of teachers to ensure continuous improvement

3. Wellbeing and Engagement strategies

Macarthur Street Primary School has developed a range of strategies to promote engagement, positive behaviour and respectful relationships for all students in our school. We acknowledge that some students may need extra social, emotional or educational support at school, and that the needs of students will change over time as they grow and learn.

A summary of the universal (whole of school), targeted (year group specific) and individual engagement strategies used by our school is included below:

<u>Universal</u>

- 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 diversity and empowers all student
- 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 Interpersonal and social capabilities
- teachers at Macarthur Street Primary School use a School Wide Positive Behaviour instructional framework to ensure an explicit, common and shared model of instruction to ensure that evidenced-based, high yield teaching practices are incorporated into all lessons
- teachers at Macarthur Street Primary School adopt a broad range of teaching and assessment approaches to effectively respond to the diverse learning styles, strengths and needs of our students and follow the standards set by the Victorian Institute of Teaching
- our school's Statement of Values are School Philosophy 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 can contribute to and provide feedback on decisions about school operations through the Junior School Council and other forums including class meetings. Students are also encouraged to speak with their teachers, and Principal whenever they have any questions or concerns.
- create opportunities for cross—age connections amongst students through school plays, athletics and peer support programs
- all students are welcome to self-refer to the teachers 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:
    - Open Parachute
- opportunities for student inclusion (i.e. recess and lunchtime activities)
- buddy programs, peers support 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

- 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 Action Plan
- 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 including through support from EAL regional officers
- we support learning and wellbeing outcomes of students from refugee background through support from Foundation House Schools Support program
- connect all Koorie students with a Koorie Engagement Support Officer
- 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, 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
- 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
- wellbeing staff will undertake health promotion and social skills development in response to needs identified by student wellbeing data, classroom teachers or other school staff each year
- staff will apply a trauma-informed approach to working with students who have experienced trauma

Individual

- 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
- Navigator
- LOOKOUT

Macarthur Street 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 Child First

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 Education 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

Macarthur Street 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. Macarthur Street Primary School will utilise the following information and tools to identify students in need of extra emotional, social or educational support:

- personal, health and learning information gathered upon enrolment and while the student is enrolled.
- attendance records.
- academic performance.
- observations by school staff such as changes in engagement, behaviour, self-care, social connectedness and motivation.
- attendance, detention and suspension data.
- engagement with families.
- self-referrals or referrals from peers.

5. Student rights and responsibilities

All members of our school community have a right to experience a safe and supportive school environment. We expect that all students, staff, parents and carers treat each other with respect and dignity. Our school's Statement of Values highlights the rights and responsibilities of members of our community.

Students have the right to:

- participate fully in their education.
- feel safe, secure, and happy at school.
- learn in an environment free from bullying, harassment, violence, 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, Macarthur Street Primary School 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.

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, verbal reminder
- teacher controlled consequences such as moving a student in a classroom or other reasonable and proportionate responses to misbehaviour
- modified timetable
- reengagement classroom can be used
- withdrawal of privileges
- referral to the principal
- restorative practices
- behaviour support and intervention meetings

- In school suspension
- suspension
- expulsion

Suspension and expulsion are measures of last resort and may only be used 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 Macarthur Street Primary School is responsible for ensuring all suspensions and expulsions are recorded on COMPASS/CASES21.

Corporal punishment is prohibited by law and will not be used in any circumstance at our school.

7. Engaging with families

Macarthur Street 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

Macarthur Street 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
- Compass, including attendance and absence data
- SOCS

Macarthur Street 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 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

Available on the School Website: Macarthur Street Primary School Policies

POLICY REVIEW AND APPROVAL

Policy last reviewed	April 2026
Consultation	School Council April 2026
Approved by	Principal School Council
Next scheduled review date	April 2028