



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.

Maryborough Education Centre (MEC) 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.

CONTENTS

1. School profile
2. School values, philosophy and vision
3. Engagement strategies
4. Identifying students in need of support
5. Student rights and responsibilities
6. Student behavioural expectations
7. Engaging with families
8. Evaluation

POLICY

1. School profile

MEC is a Prep-12 and Special School that was established. In 2017 a Flexible Learning Option (FLO) campus designed to meet the needs of disengaged middle year's students was established. Central Goldfields Shire, where the school is located, is recognised as the most disadvantaged local government area in Victoria and is in the bottom 10% of LGAs in the nation in terms of socio-economic disadvantage.

The school caters for students from P to 12 together with Special school students. The facilities include a Performing Arts Theatre, Gymnasium, Library, a Trades Skills Centre and extensive ovals. Significant work has been undertaken to continue the development of the school's buildings and grounds.

The current enrolment is approximately 1000 students with 120 of these students funded under the Program for Students with a Disability. The Flexible Learning Option (FLO) caters for 11 students. The school experienced an enrolment decline each year for a decade until, 2018 when for the first time, there was an increase of approximately 30 students. This was largely the result of a significant increase in Prep numbers.

The school's Student Family Occupation (SFO) index has steadily risen over the last few years. In 2011 it was .65 and it is now .7.

The staffing profile of MEC includes a Principal and four Assistant Principals, 77.2 full time equivalent teachers including 8.6 leading teachers, 28.8 full time equivalent Education Support (ES) staff, 17.9 full time equivalent Teacher Assistants and a qualified school nurse. The school also has a doctor and nurse practitioner one day per week under the Doctors in Secondary Schools program.

The school provides an approved curriculum based upon the Victorian F-10 curriculum, along with VCE, VET and VCAL senior programs. Individual Education Plans identify Special School students' learning goals and guide teachers in the planning and delivery of an individualised program.

The school has embraced the Berry Street Education Model with the majority of staff having completed the four day training in the program. An area of school wide focus has been the implementation of the Respectful Relationships program.

2. School values, philosophy and vision

MEC completed a rigorous School Review in 2018. At the conclusion of the review a new School Strategic Plan was developed including a new Vision and set of values. The school's vision is to be an inclusive, connected and flourishing learning community. Its values are Aspiration, Kindness and Respect.

Aspiration

- Set ambitious goals, dream big and believe in our ability to grow strive for excellence and plan to achieve our best, while being happy with who we are
- Be courageous by stepping outside our comfort zone to embrace challenge and learn from our mistakes
- Seek out positive role models
- Believe in others and encourage them to excel
- Activate our curiosity and work to make the world a better place
- Aim to be good people, good friends and good community members

Kindness

- Include others by being open and friendly while being generous with our time
- Treat everyone with fairness and dignity and show courtesy and manners
- Interact with understanding, consideration and care
- Be non-judgemental
- Understand the strength of compassion and consciously act with empathy and forgiveness
- Be mindful and allow others the opportunity to learn at all times
- Welcome newcomers and visitors
- Value and celebrate diversity and promote inclusion

Respect

- Listen with an open mind and encourage all to have a voice
- Know and follow the school rules and expectations
- Show pride, belief and optimism in ourselves and our school
- Appreciate what we have and look after our equipment
- Treat the environment with care for the future acknowledging our role as global citizens
- Recognise and celebrate the achievements of others
- Support and protect the right of others to learn

3. Engagement strategies

MEC 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.

The universal strategies used as the MEC include:

- 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
- deliver a broad curriculum including VET programs, VCE and VCAL to ensure that students are able to choose subjects and programs that are tailored to their interests, strengths and aspirations
- teachers at MEC use the E5 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 MEC 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 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 school plays, athletics, music programs and peer support programs
- All students are welcome to self-refer to the Student Wellbeing Coordinator, School Nurse, Year Group 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:
 - Respectful Relationships
 - Safe Schools
 - Berry Street Education Model
- programs, incursions, and excursions developed to address issue specific behaviour
- opportunities for student inclusion (i.e. sports teams, clubs, recess, and lunchtime activities)
- buddy programs, peers support programs

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
- all students from Year 10 and above will be assisted to develop a Career Action Plan, with targeted goals and support to plan for their future
- 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
- MEC assists students to plan their Year 10 work experience, supported by their Career Action Plan
- 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

Individual

- Student Support Groups, see:
<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/participation/pages/supportgroups.aspx>
- 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
- Doctors in Secondary School Program

MEC 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
- access to the school farm.

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

4. Identifying students in need of support

MEC 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 to help identify students in need of support and enhance student wellbeing. MEC 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, 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.

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 MEC's Bullying policy.

When a student acts in breach of the behaviour standards of our school community, MEC 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 Year Level Coordinator
- restorative practices
- detentions
- behaviour reviews

- suspension
- expulsion

Suspension and expulsion are measures of last resort and may only be used in particular situations consistent with Department policy, available at:

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/participation/pages/engagement.aspx>

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

7. Engaging with families

MEC 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

MEC 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
- attendance data
- incidents data
- school reports
- parent survey
- case management
- CASES21
- SOCS

FURTHER INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

<http://www.maryborougheducationcentre.vic.edu.au/ourschool.php?id=200>

<https://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/programs/Pages/navigator.aspx>

<https://www.childfirst.org/>

REVIEW PERIOD

This policy was last updated on Wednesday 29th May 2019 and is scheduled for review as part of the school's 3-year review cycle.

This policy was last ratified by School Council on Wednesday 29th May 2019.

Signed:



Paul Rumpff
School Council President

Date 29.5.2019