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## Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy

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### PURPOSE

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.

Myrrhee 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.

### POLICY 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
6. Student behavioural expectations
7. Engaging with families
8. Evaluation

### POLICY

#### 1. School Profile

Myrrhee Primary School is a small rural school dedicated to providing exceptional learning opportunities for our students.

The school is set in the majestic Myrrhee Valley and has 100 acres of beautiful bushlands, which the students and teachers have a strong connection to.

Myrrhee School's motto is 'Making Learning Real' as students are encouraged to pursue their passions and their creative sides. Once a week, students are involved in 'making day' where they research, plan, organise, negotiate, create and evaluate personalised projects with the assistance of staff and local experts. Some of the creations/activities include sculptures, woodwork, sewing, cooking, orienteering, bush walking and survival skills, ceramics, paintings and engineering.

The school is a focal point and a resource for the local community. The community works together to provide the students with wonderful learning opportunities. The school is staffed by dedicated and



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passionate members. In 2025 we have 39 students spread across three classes; Foundation-1, Year 2-3 and Years 4-6. This enables an outstanding teacher to student ratio as well as having support staff in each room.

The school offers specialist programs in the areas of Art, Library/Science and Language which are led by visiting teachers. An enthusiastic local musician also offers private instrumental lessons at the school.

Myrrhee School has ample facilities and resources. It values contemporary learning and teaches children for the future. Students have personalised iPads that they use as a learning tool to build their technology and organisation skills and to engage safely in the wider world. We have a strong focus on healthy lifestyles and developing the whole child. We focus on nutrition through the kitchen garden, physical development through daily exercise and mental health through our Mindful Monday sessions. We also have access to all the usual resources of other schools such as speech therapy, psychologists, school nurses, and other professional avenues.

Myrrhee is an active member of The King Valley Cluster of schools. Cluster initiatives include the Stephanie Alexander Kitchen & Garden program, a range of camps and sporting activities including Personal Best athletic sports, cultural days and professional learning initiatives. The cluster of schools work together to support each other to deliver the best possible teaching and learning programs in each of our unique rural communities.

Myrrhee School is a nurturing and inclusive school that caters for all children. We believe that there is so much out there in the world to learn and we don't let the four walls of the classroom stop us from getting out there and taking part. We are proud of our students who are responsible, active and high achieving members of our community.

## 2. School Values, Philosophy and Vision

Myrrhee Primary School's Statement of Values and School Philosophy is integral to the work that we do and is the foundation of our school community. Students, staff and members of our community are encouraged to live and demonstrate our core values of respect, integrity and kindness at every opportunity.

Our school's vision is **'Making Learning Real'**; we aim to provide an inclusive and collaborative learning environment for students, staff and families, that promotes high expectations for lifelong learners, embracing and contributing to local and global communities. With our mission to provide exceptional authentic learning experiences to provide students with the best possible foundation in life through a well-rounded education.

Myrrhee's values, which form the basis of the actions of the Myrrhee School community, are:

**Kindness:** We model and demonstrate kindness, and take every opportunity to help others that may be in need.

**Personal Best:** We strive for excellence, which means trying our hardest and doing our own personal best. We also encourage others to be their personal best!

**Caring & Inclusive:** We care for everybody with empathy and understanding. We strive to include everyone into our school community and be part of our team, at the same time, allowing them to be themselves and encourage individuality.

**Resilience:** We are adaptive and strong when dealing with the world around us. We know how to 'bounce back' during tough times and are problem solvers.



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Our Statement of Values is available online at [www.myrrheeps.vic.edu.au](http://www.myrrheeps.vic.edu.au)

### 3. Wellbeing and engagement strategies

Myrrhee Primary School staff provide a caring, stimulating and safe environment which guides students toward their full potential, in a dynamic learning environment. Myrrhee 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.

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
- 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 and that embraces and celebrates diversity and empowers all students to participate and feel valued
- 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 Myrrhee Primary School use a range of instructional models 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 Myrrhee Primary School adopt a broad range of high impact teaching and wellbeing strategies 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
- Teachers at Myrrhee 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
- staff participate in professional learning sessions aimed at developing understandings, skills and knowledge on strategies linked to wellness and positive behaviour
- all staff meetings have a specified “student wellbeing” agenda item to discuss and monitor student behaviours at a whole school level
- Our school’s Statement of Values and 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 support students moving into different stages of their schooling
- Acknowledging positive behaviour and student achievement in the classroom, and formally in school assemblies and communication to parents
- Monitoring student attendance and implement attendance improvement strategies at a whole-school, cohort and individual level



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- Students have the opportunity to contribute to and provide feedback on decisions about school operations through their elected School and Vice School Captains. 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 the arts, Making Day, athletics, music programs
- All students are welcome to self-refer to the Student Wellbeing Coordinator, 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
  - PAUSE Program
  - Safe Schools
  - The Zones of Regulation
  - Restorative justice chats
  - Student leadership roles
  - Circle time
  - Life Education
  - Sun Smart
  - eSmart program
- Programs, incursions and excursions developed to address issue specific needs or behaviour (i.e. anger management programs)
- Opportunities for student inclusion (i.e. sports teams, clubs, 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***

- Being a small school we have one teacher for multiple year levels, 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
- Use of formative assessment tools to identify students' point of need for focus group targeted learning
- Targeted literacy support in small groups for students identified as working towards expected achievement levels
- 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
- 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



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- 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
- All 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**

Primary School implements a range of strategies that support and promote individual engagement. These can include:

- building constructive relationships with at-risk students 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
- individualised speech program for students identified through assessment from the school's speech therapist

considering if any environmental changes need to be made, for example changing the classroom set up

- developing an Individual Learning Plan and/or a Behaviour Support Plan
- staff will apply a trauma-informed approach to working with students who have experienced trauma
- all students in Out of Home Care will have an Individual Learning Plan and may be referred to Student Support Services for an Educational Needs Assessment
- referring the student to:
  - o school-based wellbeing supports
  - o Student Support Services
  - o Appropriate external supports such as council based youth and family services (including NESAY), other allied health professionals, 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 Plan in collaboration with the student and their family
- running regular Student Support Group meetings for all students:
  - o with a disability
  - o in Out of Home Care
  - o and with other complex needs that require ongoing support and monitoring.

## **4. Identifying students in need of support**

Myrrhee 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



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developing and implementing strategies help identify students in need of support and enhance student wellbeing. Myrrhee 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
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## 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

Behavioural expectations of students are grounded in our school's Statement of Values/Student code of conduct. Behavioural expectations (and classroom rules), are created within each class at the beginning of every year as part of the school's "Start Up" program.

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 Myrrhee Primary School's Bullying policy.

When a student acts in breach of the behaviour standards of our school community, Myrrhee Primary School will institute a staged response, consistent with the Department's policies on behaviour, discipline



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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 implements 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.

A behaviour log is kept on the app uEducateUs to record incidents that have required teacher intervention. A positive approach to behaviour is desirable to foster a school climate where personal responsibility and self-discipline will be developed. We use the high impact wellbeing strategies as well as other strategies to support this approach including:

- build a strong, professional relationship with students
- acknowledge positive behaviour
- foster an attitude of mutual respect, cooperation, tolerance and understanding
- encourage students to reach their potential
- establish a set of rules and rights at a classroom level, and develop an understanding of school rules
- be consistent and fair
- develop pride in the school
- ensure supervision of children at all times.

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.

The Principal of Myrrhee 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

Myrrhee 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.



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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

Myrrhee 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

Myrrhee 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
- Made available in hard copy from school administration upon request

## FURTHER INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

The following Department of Education policies are relevant to this Student Engagement and Wellbeing Policy:

- Statement of Values
- School Philosophy
- Bullying Prevention
- Child Safe Standards
- Student Leadership
- Inclusion and Diversity

Myrrhee Primary School policies and documents can be found at <https://www.myrrheeps.vic.edu.au>





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## POLICY REVIEW AND APPROVAL

Policy last reviewed	March 2025
Approved by	The Principal
Next scheduled review date	Before November 2028

\*The recommended minimum review cycle for this policy is 3 to 4 years