

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that all students and members of our school community understand:

- our commitment to providing a safe and supportive learning environment for students
- expectations for positive student behaviour
- support available to students and families
- our school's policies and procedures for responding to inappropriate student behaviour

Murchison 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

Murchison Primary School (established 1860) serves the rural town of Murchison and surrounding farming areas. Murchison is a historic town situated on the bank of the Goulburn River 36 km south of Shepparton. Our student body reflects the diversity of the community, in which links are forged through school-based programs. The school enrolment of 99, of which 9% are indigenous as of February 2019 is organised into five home groups. The school consists of a brick building built in 1906; housing a community meeting space, professional's room, a library/ music room, the Year 6 Learning Studio, MASK room and resource room. The BER building includes four open plan classrooms, staff room, offices and staff resource room. Art lessons are held in the community upgraded shelter shed. Outdoor spaces include a covered outdoor learning area in the courtyard,

a multi-purpose court, oval and the large covered playground provides an all-weather venue for students.

The school values providing an inclusive, caring environment where children are encouraged to be the best, they can be by being safe, responsible, respectful learners within the community. Our focus is on the development of each child, socially, emotionally and academically. Our specialist programs are Art, Music and Digital Technology. Senior students have the opportunity to learn a musical instrument and perform in the Murchison Band. Student agency is encouraged through participation in the Junior School Council and the Student Leadership Team.

2. School values, philosophy and vision

Murchison Primary School's vision: As an inclusive school, we provide excellent education for students from Murchison and the surrounding community.

Murchison Primary School's mission is to provide students with the best possible foundation in life through a well-rounded education.

Murchison Primary School's objective is to ensure all students leave our school with a practical understanding of the curriculum.

Murchison Primary School's values:

We pride our self on being an inclusive school. Our values are that we strive to be the best we can be by being safe, responsible, respectful, learners within our community. We have high expectations of ourselves and others as demonstrated in our school expectations. We persist with our learning and care for ourselves and our school. We value diversity and our school motto of 'Be the Best You Can Be' underpins the core values of the school. Staff and students work together to develop emotional intelligences so that students understand how to have self-control, self-awareness, be motivated, manage relationships, develop empathy and skills of being friendly, safe and strong. We strongly value the development of social/emotional skills and academic achievement.

Our Statement of Values is available online at our school's website.

3. Engagement strategies

Murchison 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:

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
- deliver a broad curriculum to ensure that students are able to choose subjects and programs that are tailored to their interests, strengths and aspirations
- teachers at Murchison Primary School use our instructional model 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 Murchison 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 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 Leadership team and Junior School Council. 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 sporting events, music program, multi age activity days, buddy and peer support opportunities
- all students are welcome to self-refer to staff or the 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
 - programs, incursions and excursions developed to address issue specific behaviour
 - opportunities for student inclusion including Buddy programs and lunch time activities

Targeted

- Koorie Engagement Support Officer informed of all enrolled Koorie students
- all students in Out of Home Care will be appointed a Learning Mentor, have an Individual Education Plan and will be referred to Student Support Services for an Educational Needs Assessment
- 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

- social skills programs

Individual

- Student Support Groups, see:
<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/participation/pages/supportgroups.aspx>
- Individual Education Plan and Behaviour Support Plan
- Program for Students with Disabilities
- referral to Student Support Services
- referral to ChildFirst, Headspace
- Navigator

Murchison 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 Education 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

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
- 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

Murchison 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. Murchison 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, 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 Murchison Primary School's Bullying policy.

When a student acts in breach of the behaviour standards of our school community, Murchison 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.

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 Student Support Services
- 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

Murchison 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

Murchison 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
- SOCS

FURTHER INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

[Statement of Values and School Philosophy Policy](#)

[Bullying Prevention Policy](#)

[Child Safe Standards](#)

REVIEW CYCLE

This policy was last updated in July 2019 and is scheduled for bi-annual review.