

Merino Consolidated School

SCHOOL STUDENT WELLBEING AND ENGAGEMENT POLICY



Help for non-English speakers

If you need help to understand the information in this policy please contact: 0355 791 305

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.

Merino Consolidated 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.

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

Merino CS was established in created in the early 1950s by a consolidation of surrounding small single room schools which were suffering declining enrolments, our history now encompasses theirs, which includes Henty as the first inland settlement in Victoria.

- Merino CS was formed by the amalgamation of the schools of Merino, Paschendale, Henty, Tahara and Glenorchy.
- We currently have 8 students between Foundation and Grade 6. We have 1 full time teaching Principal and a Full time Education Assistant and a .3 Business Manager. The school is visited by a Wellbeing Officer and Speech Pathologist.
- As a result, our school grounds expansive, and we are a very well-resourced school. Most students that attend our school live locally and tend to be driven or catch the bus.
- We strive to provide a nurturing and challenging environment that empowers students to reach their personal best, both academically and socially.

2. School values, philosophy and vision

Merino Consolidated School's Statement of Values and School Philosophy is integral to the work that we do and is the foundation of our school community. At Merino Consolidated School we follow the values established through School Wide Positive Behaviour; Be Safe, Be Respectful and Be A Learner. Our values program focuses on building resilience, inclusion and achieving individual classroom learning goals. We focus on personal best work at all times, building on our strengths and working on our weaknesses.

At Merino CS, we foster our students' lifelong love for learning, encourage them to try new and exciting things, and give them a solid foundation to build on. At Merino CS, we also believe that a happy child is a successful one, we are committed to providing a positive, safe and stimulating environment for children to learn and where all are valued. We intend that all children should enjoy their learning, achieve their potential and become independent life-long learners.

Our school's vision is to empower students to reach their personal best, and fully equip them to contribute positively to society as happy, healthy young adults.

Our Statement of Values is available online at:

<http://merinocs.vic.edu.au/home/vision-and-mission/>

3. Engagement strategies

Merino Consolidated 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 **proactive 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 by building relationships and understanding the backgrounds of the school community*
- *welcoming all parents/carers and being encouraging them to be 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 Merino Consolidated School use a Merino CS instructional framework to ensure an explicit, common and shared model of instruction for all subject to ensure that evidenced-based, high yield teaching practices are incorporated into all lessons*
- *teachers at Merino CS 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*
- *Merino Consolidated 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 with the local Casterton Kindergarten and High Schools (Casterton, Bainbridge and Monave) to support students moving into different stages of their schooling*
- *positive behaviour and student achievement (School Wide Positive Behaviour program) is acknowledged in the classroom, and formally in school assemblies and communication to parents in the monthly Newsletter*
- *monitor student attendance and implement attendance improvement strategies at a whole-school, cohort and individual level*
- *create opportunities for school plays, sporting competitions, and school camps*
- *All students are welcome to self-refer to the School Chaplain or Principal if they would like to discuss a particular issue or feel as though they may need support of any kind. Merino CS is 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*
 - *School Wide Positive Behaviour*
 - *Safe Schools*
- *opportunities for student inclusion (i.e. sports teams, clubs, recess and lunchtime activities)*
- *buddy programs, peers support programs (if numbers permit)*

Targeted

- *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*
- *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

- *Individual Learning Plan and Behaviour Support Plan and Merino 360 Learning Profile*
- *Proactive approach following practise on School wide Positive Behaviour*
- *Program for Students with Disabilities based on trauma practises*
- *referral to Student Welfare Coordinator and Student Support Services*
- *referral to ChildFirst, Headspace*
- *Lookout*

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

- *building proactive 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 once a term and complete a Merino 360 Learning profile in conjunction with the student and careers*
- *developing an Individual Learning Plan and/or a Behaviour Support Plan as well as relevant social stories to assist student to build classroom skill to be successful.*
- *considering if any environmental changes need to be made, for example changing the classroom set up and provide individual classroom materials for student to be successful such as fidget toys, weighted blankets and sensory time out places in the classroom*
- *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*
- *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.*

4. Identifying students in need of support

Merino Consolidated School is committed to providing the necessary support to ensure our students are supported intellectually, emotionally and socially. Merino Consolidated 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 the Merino Consolidated School community have a right to experience a safe and supportive school environment, be treated with respect and dignity and feel valued, safe and supported in an environment that encourages freedom of thought and expression
- 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.

All students have the right to:	All staff have the right to:	All parents have the right to:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 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 be treated with respect and fairness as individuals • expect a learning program that meets their individual needs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • expect to be able to work in an atmosphere of order and cooperation • have the opportunity to carry out a classroom program that caters for all children • use discretion in the application of rules and consequences • receive respect and support from the school community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • know that their children are in a safe, happy learning environment where they are treated fairly and with respect. • expect a positive and supportive approach to their child's learning • expect communication and participation in their child's education and learning
All students have a responsibility to:	All staff have a responsibility to:	All parents have a responsibility to:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ be prepared to learn and explore their full potential ❖ respect the right of others to learn. ❖ respect and care for their property and the property of others ❖ show care and respect for the physical school environment ❖ treat others fairly and with kindness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ build positive relationships with students as basis for engagement and learning ❖ use and manage the resources of the school to create stimulating, safe and meaningful learning ❖ treat all members of the School community with respect, fairness and dignity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ build positive relationships with members of the school community ❖ ensure students attend school and have the appropriate learning materials ❖ encourage their children to develop respectful relationships with others
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- ❖ 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 and management

Behavioural expectations of students, staff and families are grounded in our school’s Statement of Values and work in conjunction with the School Wide Positive Behaviour Program. The Behaviour Matrix has been constructed alongside the school community and all students have ownership over what is included – Appendix 1

Student bullying behaviour will be responded to consistently with Example School’s Bullying policy.

When a student acts in breach of the behaviour standards of our school community, Merino Consolidated 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 – Appendix 2 – Decision Making Flowchart

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 or other reasonable and proportionate responses to misbehaviour*
- *withdrawal of privileges*
- *restorative practices*
- *detentions*

- *behaviour reviews*
- *suspension*
- *expulsion*

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 Merino Consolidated School is responsible for ensuring all suspensions and expulsions are recorded on CASES21.

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

7. Engaging with families

Merino Consolidated 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

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
- Student 360 Learning Profiles (Individual Learning Plans)
- school reports
- parent survey - before, during and at the end of the school year
- case management
- CASES21
- SOCS

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 in transition and enrolment packs
- 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

Policy last reviewed	05/01/22
Approved by	Principal School Council
Next scheduled review date	05/01/22

Appendix 1

EXPECTATION AND BEHAVIOUR MATRIX
MERINO CONSOLIDATED SCHOOL
2020

EXPECTATIONS	ALL SETTINGS	CLASSROOM	OFFICE	HALL	TOILETS	PLAYGROUND	KITCHEN/ GARDEN	ART ROOM	LIBRARY
Be Respectful	We use manners We take care of materials and school property We respect other peoples space We wear our school uniform We speak kindly	We line up when the bell goes One person speaks at a time We raise our hands to speak	We enter quietly We wait calmly We knock on the staff room door	We respect other people's sensitivity to noise	We flush the toilet We respect other's privacy	We are inclusive and always make sure people do not feel left out. We always line up and wait our turn. We put our rubbish in the bin We share equipment We take care of our garden	We use inside voices in the kitchen Work co-operatively We make positive contributions when discussing the menu/planting	We use inside voices We work cooperatively	We use library voices We follow instructions
Be Safe	We keep hands and feet to ourselves We use equipment safely We leave areas clean and tidy We are mindful of visitors	We enter and exit quietly We always walk	We are mindful of surroundings	We understand where the out of bounds areas are in the hall	We always wash our hands We leave our food outside We play games outside	We are aware of different weather conditions when playing on equipment. We wear our hats in Terms 1 and 4 We sit down when we are eating	We always walk We take care with kitchen/garden equipment We always wear protective clothes/footwear We always wash our hands	We wear protective clothing when required	We wait calmly for borrowing
Be a Learner	We are prepared for learning We are always on time We challenge ourselves to do better We celebrate our achievements	We actively participate in learning We are prepared for learning	We follow instructions and use our manners	We listen and follow instructions We are prepared for learning	We use toilet paper, soap and water correctly. We are quick and leave promptly We use the toilets at break times	We understand where to play in the right area.	We are open to new experiences We are prepared for learning	We are open to new experiences We are prepared for learning	We use our reading time while waiting to borrow

U:\2020\2020 School Wide Positive Behaviour

Appendix 2

DECISION-MAKING FLOWCHART



Adult behaviour	Adult response	Actions	Adult Behaviour	Adult response	Actions
Calm Consistent Brief Immediate Respectful	1. Non Verbal Prompt – visual cue or stand near	Give positive feedback once desired behaviour is displayed	Calm	1. Student referred to the office (principal) to conference student – pink slip	Major Behaviour recorded clear track
	2. Directive – state matrix behaviour we want to see		Consistent	2. Withdrawn from the group depending upon the situation.	
	3. Re-teach the rule – state and demonstrate matrix behaviour		Brief	3. Possible phone call home for pick up if the child is unmanageable.	
	4. Provide Choice – re-engage or natural or logical consequence applied (sit out, walk with teacher)	Enter minor referral	Immediate	4. When the child is calm, meeting with parents to put a plan in place to move forward – use of data collected.	Analysis of data
	5. Apply consequence		Respectful		

U:\2020\2020 School Wide Positive Behaviour

Appendix 3

Be Safe	
<input type="checkbox"/> We keep hands and feet to ourselves	
<input type="checkbox"/> We use equipment safely	
<input type="checkbox"/> We leave areas clean and tidy	
<input type="checkbox"/> We are mindful of visitors	

Be Respectful	
<input type="checkbox"/> We use manners	
<input type="checkbox"/> We take care of materials and school property	
<input type="checkbox"/> We respect other people's space	
<input type="checkbox"/> We wear our school uniform	
<input type="checkbox"/> We speak kindly	

Be Learner	
<input type="checkbox"/> We are prepared for learning	
<input type="checkbox"/> We are always on time	
<input type="checkbox"/> We challenge ourselves to do better	
<input type="checkbox"/> We celebrate our achievements	

U:\2020\2020 SCHOOL WIDE POSITIVE BEHAVIOUR