



MILAWA PRIMARY SCHOOL

STUDENT ENGAGEMENT and WELLBEING POLICY

Approved 2013 - To Be Reviewed 2015

Introduction

For students to be successful learners it is critical that we develop and promote positive school cultures and increase student wellbeing. This policy focuses on the development of pro-social behaviours and **emphasises** prevention and early intervention rather than punishment as a way to respond to inappropriate behaviour.

Our Student Engagement Policy sets out the rights, responsibilities and shared expectations of everyone in the school community, including students, parents and staff. It has been developed through a consultative process with students, parents and staff. The policy is framed within the *Effective Schools are Engaging Schools: Student Engagement Policy Guidelines* and associated legislative requirements.

Section 1: SCHOOL PROFILE

Milawa Primary School is situated 17 kilometres east of Wangaratta, approximately 260 kilometres from Melbourne. The School has served the rural population of the area since 1906. Students come from Milawa, Oxley, Tarrawingee, Bobinawarrah and Carboor. Most students travel to school by car or school bus. Parents' occupations are broad and varied; they include farmers, business owners, accountants, teachers, shop employees, CFA employees, and interior designers, to name a few. The school is 0.39 on the Student Family Occupation scale. Employment levels across the school families are very high. Although situated in a rural area, only about 25% of school families really solely on primary production as their main source of income.

Milawa Primary School is a member of the Ovens Learning Community of schools, which includes Whorouly, Oxley, Glenrowan, Winton, Everton and Carraragarmungee.

Milawa Primary School prides itself on the sense of community and belonging – we are 'Large enough to excel, small enough to care'. Providing a challenging and diverse curriculum based on an integrated curriculum model, the school has the support of the community, parents and staff. Based on the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development's (DEECD) Effective Schools Model, the school has demonstrated that it is an effective school.

Milawa Primary School stresses the importance of literacy and numeracy, encouraging the use of technology to support learning. The school provides programs in all domains of AusVELS. Specialist teachers present the Library, Art, EQ, Music, Blueearth and Italian programs. The classroom programs are enriched through camps, excursions, performances, cluster activities and staff Professional Learning.

Milawa Primary School places great emphasis and value on being a community school with parents, students, teachers and the community working closely together to provide a quality education. Many of our school programs could not operate without the support of parents. Participation of different groups within the school community is essential to the success of our classroom and out-of-school programs.

The school currently operates with a three classroom structure: Foundation/One, Two/Three and Four/Five/Six with a teaching staff of three full time teachers, and a Principal. Students are supported by a Literacy specialist who provides a Reading Recovery and Literacy Intervention Programs at 0.3EFT. The school is supported by a Business Manager, and Education Support Officers.

The following values underpin the beliefs of the Milawa Primary School community and provide the basis for our actions:

Engage: Students demonstrate engagement in their learning at school and at home by listening, paying attention, making eye contact, asking questions and being willing to try new things with a positive attitude.

Respect: Respect for themselves, others, diversity, opinions, property, time and cultures. This is demonstrated through kindness, honesty, care, responsibility, organisation, by speaking up, lending a hand, being polite, using manners and giving everything your personal best.

Create: We encourage students to take what they have learned and use concepts and knowledge to imagine, aspire, to have ideas, to express themselves, design, write, invent and produce.

Connect: Connect with learning, with other students, teachers, parents, the Ovens Learning Community, the local community, the environment and the world. Connect through friendships, make links with learning, online in the digital world, through reading and participation in a wide and varied experiences.

WHOLE SCHOOL PREVENTION STATEMENT

The School is committed to providing a safe, nurturing, stimulating and inclusive learning environment. We aim to recognise and cater for all children, regardless of academic, religious, economic or cultural background, and we aim to provide programs which enhance the individual's talents. **Students can reach their full academic potential only when they are happy, safe and healthy, and when there is a positive school culture to support them.**

The school values form the foundation of our whole school prevention program which consists of the following:

- A behaviour management program which encourages positive behaviours and sets out clear consequences for inappropriate behaviour both in the yard and in the classroom

- Ensuring effective Individual Behavioural Management Plans are put in place when appropriate
- Specific engagement and alternative programs for children at risk
- Support from the school's support services are available to parents, students and staff
- A school environment where students are engaged and want to come to school.
- Support programs offered for students who have difficulty in learning or who have been recognised as having a disability

The Whole School Prevention strategies listed are aimed at supporting the majority of students who behave appropriately and demonstrate the school's values in their interactions with others. The main emphases in this set of strategies are on:

- High behavioural and learning expectations of all students in all situations
- Explicit instruction of emotional intelligence through programs including Bounce Back, Circle Time, Restorative Practices, Parking Lot, Bluearth and through the music classroom.
- Consistent behavioural expectations clearly articulated and displayed in all learning environments
- Ensuring a learning environment where all students are able to participate in a learning program that meets their individual needs, including SMART goals and an individual learning plan for each student
- Providing opportunities for authentic Student Voice through a Ministerial Council, Circle Time and Student Leadership
- Working in partnership with families and the local community
- Developing 'start up' behaviours in all learners (eg Listening skills, organisational skills, questioning skills) through direct instruction, modelling and positive verbal feedback
- All consequences for inappropriate behaviour are to meet the needs of the student in question

In all schools, and across the wider community, there are individuals who may require additional support or intervention to ensure they do not impact on the learning, wellbeing and safety of others. For this small percentage of our student population, the school will implement actions and consequences as described in Appendix 1: *A Staged Response*.

Attendance: Research supports the belief that regular attendance is a major factor contributing to student achievement and wellbeing. Milawa PS has a long history of excellent student attendance leaves, with family holidays during school terms being the only area of concern. Where issues of student attendance appear to developing parents are immediately contacted to discuss the issue.

Bullying: It is everyone's right and responsibility to report any and all acts of bullying. All reports of bullying will be taken seriously and be acted on immediately by the school. Confidentiality will at all times be respected.

What is Bullying?

Bullying is repeated verbal, physical, social or psychological aggressive behaviour by a person or group directed towards a less powerful person or group that is intended to cause harm, distress or fear.

There are some specific types of bullying behaviour:

- **verbal or written abuse** - such as targeted name-calling or jokes, or displaying offensive posters
- **violence** - including threats of violence
- **sexual harassment** - unwelcome or unreciprocated conduct of a sexual nature, which could reasonably be expected to cause offence, humiliation or intimidation
- **homophobia** and other hostile behaviour towards students relating to gender and sexuality
- **discrimination including racial discrimination** - treating people differently because of their identity
- **cyberbullying** - either online or via mobile phone.

There are also some behaviours, which, although they might be unpleasant or distressing, are not bullying. These behaviours will receive appropriate responses, consequences and management as required:

- **mutual conflict** - which involves a disagreement, but not an imbalance of power. Unresolved mutual conflict can develop into bullying if one of the parties targets the other repeatedly in retaliation.
- **single-episode acts** of nastiness or physical aggression, or aggression directed towards many different people, is not bullying
- **social rejection or dislike** is not bullying unless it involves deliberate and repeated attempts to cause distress, exclude or create dislike by others.

Anti Bullying Program; Throughout the year all classes will discuss the many forms of bullying and continually revisit our School Values and Behaviours.

In instances of bullying, positive counselling programs will be initiated for each individual with the aim that those who have been identified as bullying will take steps to redress their own behaviour. If the student is not able to do this without support, appropriate referral will be made to a social worker or a psychologist. Parents will be informed at each step of this process.

Children who have experienced bullying will receive support with strategies to help them deal with bullying behaviour through the use of Restorative Practices strategies. Counselling may be provided by the principal, a Social Worker or a psychologist if required.

Support will be made available to parents, and clear communication will be maintained.

Cyber Bullying: Cyber bullying is an insidious form of bullying. Milawa PS minimises the opportunity for it to occur by restricting student use of mobile phones and preventing access to computer social networking sites by use of effective filtering software. We are also involved in developing as an 'eSmart' school through the Alannah and Madeline foundation.

All staff have the responsibility to ensure that:

- All forms of cyber bullying are prohibited
- Staff, parents and students are aware of cyber bullying and provide regular learning experiences to remain up to date with technology and strategies to stay safe online.
- An acceptable use policy is in use for technology, including computers, mobile phones and other mobile devices, whilst on the school premises and this code is discussed and circulated at the beginning of each school year
- All cases of cyber bullying are reported to the Principal and responded to promptly
- There is supervision of technologies where cyber bullying may occur.
- No-one participates in cyber bullying without all rights to technology being revoked
- Mobile phones, cameras or other digital devices are not used to record audio and visual material that is not an authorised part of the school curriculum.
- The privacy of students, staff and members of the school community is not compromised unless a Duty of Care instance arises

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/programs/bullystoppers/Pages/what.aspx>

RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

We believe it is the **right** of every individual to feel safe in a supportive environment, to have an equal opportunity to learn and to have their individuality, ideas and property respected.

We further believe that it is the **responsibility** of every individual to care for themselves and others and to respect the rights of all.

STUDENTS

RIGHTS	RESPONSIBILITIES
To be able to learn and feel secure in a safe, supportive environment.	To act in a safe, responsible manner and to be supportive of fellow students.
To have his/her opinion and property respected.	To be considerate of others' feelings and respect their belongings
To have appropriate access to school facilities	Speak respectfully to all school community members.
To have appropriate access to the teacher.	To take care of and share school equipment.
To know what is acceptable behaviour and the consequences of unacceptable behaviour.	To respect the rights of others to share the teacher's time.
To have his/her individual learning style understood and catered for.	To be aware of the school rules and accept consequences when necessary.
	To attend school unless unwell.

STAFF

RIGHTS	RESPONSIBILITIES
To work in a pleasant, safe environment and to be treated with courtesy by all.	To act as role models and provide suitable, interesting activities while maintaining a safe environment.
To be able to implement appropriate management strategies for children who are interfering with the rights of others	To be consistent and fair in the implementation of these management techniques.
To contact parents/carers when necessary and to expect their support.	To be approachable, to listen and be prepared to consult with parents.
	To act appropriately and discreetly and make time to act on

<p>To be informed of any family situation or home problem that may affect a student's learning or behaviour.</p>	<p>information. Encourage and celebrate regular class attendance.</p>
<p>To be involved in a collaborative decision - making model within the school.</p>	<p>To reflect on school based issues and be prepared to consult, contribute and negotiate.</p>
<p>To be seen as an individual able to express a point of view.</p>	<p>To encourage others to think about, respect and value others' opinions.</p>

PARENTS

RIGHTS	RESPONSIBILITIES
<p>To have information on school processes and curriculum.</p>	<p>To understand policies and policy changes</p>
<p>To be able to participate in school decision making processes.</p>	<p>within Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, Victoria.</p>
<p>To expect consistent approaches to behaviour management by teachers throughout the school.</p>	<p>To make time to be involved and support their child/ren.</p>
<p>To expect that there will be no form of discrimination against parents or children.</p>	<p>To notify school of student absences.</p>
<p>To receive and offer information regarding their child's educational progress and behaviour.</p>	<p>To reinforce/support school practices at home and advise the school of any concerns.</p>
	<p>To be aware of the adverse effect of discrimination and to model appropriate behaviours to the child at home.</p>
	<p>To ask for assistance and/or interviews and to be aware of any home problems that may affect the child's learning.</p>
	<p>To speak respectfully to all school community members.</p>

SHARED EXPECTATIONS

At Milawa Primary School we aim to educate children to be engaged in their learning, respectful of themselves and others, creative in thinking and doing, and connected to their school, community and the world.

Engage	Respect	Create	Connect
Concentrate Listen Eye contact Have-a-go Participate Positive Aware Ask questions	Respect for: Self, others, diversity, opinions, property, time and culture Show respect through: Kindness Honesty Care Responsibility Organisation Speak up Lend a hand Polite Manners	Imagine Aspire Ideas Express Design Write Invent Produce	Connect with: Learning Students Teachers Parents Ovens Learning Community Local Community Environment World Connect through: Conversations Friendships Make learning links Digital Read Participate

These values form the Milawa PS Values and Behaviours document that was designed by collaboration with staff, parents and students. Awards and consequences will be brought back to these values and this will be the basis of our school behaviour.

The school recognises that all children learn in different ways and at different rates. We aim to equip every student with the skills needed to ensure lifelong learning.

A cohesive and enthusiastic School Council provides strong leadership and parent participation in decision making. In addition, school based activities such as performances, sport, fundraising and special events are proving an effective means of informal communication between parents and teachers. Parents can support the school by ensuring regular attendance, modelling positive behaviours and assisting their children with their work. We also encourage parents to use the school website, Facebook page, sms and email to maintain communication with the school.

SCHOOL ACTIONS and CONSEQUENCES

The school has clear approaches to assist all students to become and remain engaged in their educational journey. We recognise that young people need knowledge and a broad range of social, personal and thinking skills to be successful. They need to develop the capacity to manage themselves as individuals, and in relation to others, to understand the world in which they live, and act effectively within that world.

Milawa PS has developed a range of positive behaviour interventions:

- * Acknowledging Positive play for children displaying thought for others in the school, this can be verbally or through weekly Principals awards that are related to our school values.

- * Classroom acknowledgement for children displaying positive behaviours. This varies in each classroom, however includes things such as star charts, raffles and rewards for group success.

- * Classroom management procedures that include positive interaction with a variety of teachers, and encourage strategies for self-discipline and development of responsibility for actions. This is managed with a Restorative Practices Approach.

- * Explicit teaching of self-discipline and appropriate behaviour through the implementation of a whole school focus on Emotional Intelligence (EQ) through Bluearth, Music, Bounce Back, Circle Time, Parking Lot and Games Factory.

Appendix 1: SCHOOL ACTIONS AND CONSEQUENCES: A STAGED RESPONSE

The school is committed to providing a safe, secure, stimulating and positive learning environment. This policy, through the whole school prevention strategies supports the school's Strategic Plan goals and priorities in improving attendance across the school, and aiming for continued high levels of student engagement and wellbeing.

The school's code of conduct and the whole school positive behaviours approaches support this safe, secure learning environment. The progressive consequences for students who have difficulty meeting the school community's high expectations of behaviour are part of our staged response in this area:

Consequences for unsafe play in the yard:

- Reminders of appropriate standards of behaviour
- Warning from the yard duty teacher
- Time Out for half of lunchtime spent in supervised, outside area (parents notified of this consequence)
- For repeated breaches of our school values and behaviour expectations, parent conference with the classroom teacher. An Individual Behaviour Management Plan will be developed.
- Referral to the Principal and an extended period of Time Out allocated or limited play area allocated. Student support group established, with parents, Principal and any other agencies including SSSO.
- School suspension for severe breaches of code that impact on the safety and wellbeing of other students or staff.

Consequences for disruptive or challenging behaviour in classrooms:

- Communication with parents throughout the process
- Restorative Practices approach to social and emotional intelligence used to build positive social behaviours
- Negotiated classroom plan with teachers and students with a preventative approach underpinning these plans
- Reflection on student's learning program, pre-referral protocols followed
- Referral to Principal and Student Support Group (SSG) established with Individual Behaviour Management Plan developed with consultation of SSSO
- Suspension for severe breaches of school's values and behaviours that impact on the safety and wellbeing of other students or staff

NB: Immediate suspension will be implemented for extreme cases where a student who behaves in a manner that puts the health, safety and wellbeing of themselves, any other student, or any staff member at significant risk. The period of suspension (up to five days) will be at the discretion of the principal.

The Principal will notify parents immediately and require the student to be collected from school.

A SSG meeting will be held within 48 hours of the student being suspended.

Referral to agencies including the DEECD SSSO branch will be a consideration, as will support services for parents and carers where necessary.

A Student Absence Learning Plan will be developed for any suspension period greater than two school days, and a plan for return to School will be considered on a needs basis.

The DEECD Student Engagement Guidelines (pp26-28) provide clear guidance for principals in these matters and will be the point of reference in any extended suspension situation. Expulsion procedures are also clearly outlined and maybe referred to on:
<http://www.eduweb.vic.gov.au/edulibrary/public/stuman/wellbeing/segministerorder.pdf>

APPENDIX: Restorative Practices Approach

Regarding Misbehaviour:

- What happened?
- What were you thinking of at the time?
- What have you thought of since?
- Who has been affected by what you have done? In what way?
- What do you think you need to do to make things right?

To help those affected:

- What did you think when you realized what had happened?
- What impact has this incident had on you and others?
- What has been the hardest thing for you?
- What do you think needs to happen to make things right?
- **Small Impromptu Conferences:** Building on the affective questions, bringing everyone involved in the incident together and resolve the problem relatively quickly. These may include a follow-up commitment to reintegrate the students with something constructive and specific to try and achieve.
- **Circles:** As a symbol of community, circles are one of the most distinctive and flexible forms of restorative practices. These can be used proactively to build social capital or create classroom norms or as a response to wrongdoing.

Tips for circles:

1. Set clear topics and goals for the outcome of the circle
2. Set a positive tone. If you are confident and upbeat, the students will follow your lead
3. Keep the focus. In a kind and supportive way, make sure the conversation sticks to the goal you have set
4. Make students your allies (prep some students and ask them to speak first)
5. Always sit in the circle with students and participate fully (p.33)

- **Formal Conferences:** 2 Types

1. **Restorative conferences:** formal responses to wrongdoing where all those involved and affected by an incident come together with a trained facilitator to explore what happened, who was affected and what needs to be done to make things right. the participants include those who did the wrong and those who were affected by the wrong, often including family or friends of both parties. The conference takes a fair amount of time to organize and carry out and is facilitated by someone who has not been directly involved. The IIRP model is called "Real Justice" conference. There is a clear script to follow and training is helpful (see www.IIRP.org).
2. **Family group decision making:** or Family group conferencing are events where decisions and plans need to be made about a young person. There is a high level of family involvement and often include extended family and friends. There are 3 parts: 1- the professionals outline the problems, legal situation or various resources available. 2- "Family alone time" where professionals leave the room and the family discuss and develop a written plan. 3- the professionals brought back in and the family explains the plan to them. These conferences are found in social welfare and juvenile justice, but are starting to be used in educational settings to deal with ongoing behavioral difficulties, truancy, school phobia and bullying, either by or of the young person. They are sometimes used as an alternative to suspension or expulsion