

<p>Mill Park Primary School <i>Education for Life</i></p> 	<p><b>STUDENT WELLBEING AND ENGAGEMENT POLICY</b></p>	<p>Responsibility: Assistant Principal Revised: 2019 Next Review: 2022</p>
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## 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.

Mill Park 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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2. School values, philosophy and vision
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5. Student rights and responsibilities
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## POLICY

### 1. School profile

Mill Park Primary School was established in 1980 and is located in the northern suburbs of Melbourne. We have 530 students enrolled from Prep to Year 6 and 45 school staff members. We strive to provide a nurturing and challenging environment that empowers students to reach their personal best, both academically and socially. We actively promote a social responsibility, respect, resilience, perseverance and independence to capably prepare our students for an every changing and complex world.

Our school is culturally diverse community with no dominant ethnic group. The school has a commitment to the Early Years and Middle Years philosophies and improving student outcomes is its highest priority.

Our school has a community link with the kindergartens within the vicinity of the school. This has a very positive effect on the transition process for our Prep students. The school's positive links with neighboring secondary colleges continues to support student transition from Year 6 to Year 7.

Our parents/guardians are well supported within the school community. Community services such as Uniting Kildonan, Anglicare, State School's Relief and a variety of local Psychologist and Occupational Therapists are offered to families when needed and required. The school office sets up payment plans for excursions, incursions and camps when necessary and we have a second hand uniform sale where families can buy selected items of the school uniform.

## 2. School values, philosophy and vision

Mill Park Primary School is committed to providing a safe, secure and stimulating learning environment for all students. Students can reach their full educational potential only when they are happy, healthy and safe, and when there is a positive school culture to engage and support them in their learning. Our school acknowledges that student wellbeing and student learning outcomes are inextricably linked.

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

*Our schools vision* – A dynamic school, promoting integrity, life long learning and the attainment of excellence.

*Our schools mission* – Highest quality education through the recognition of individual learning styles, effective communication, team work and continuous improvement.

## 3. Engagement strategies

Mill Park 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 whole school, targeted year levels and individual engagement strategies used by our school is included below:

### Whole School:

- 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
- collaboratively develop and implement a fair and respectful whole-school engagement and behaviour management approach
- our schools vision, mission and values are incorporated into our curriculum and promoted to students, staff and the school community so that they are shared and celebrated as the foundation of our school community
- teachers at Mill Park 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
- promote a culture of safety for Aboriginal **Koorie** children, students with diverse backgrounds and students with disabilities.
- promote a culture of safety for students enrolled under the International Students Program
- 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 Student Council. Students are also encouraged to speak with their teachers, PLC Leaders, Assistant Principals and Principal whenever they have any questions or concerns
- create opportunities for cross—age connections amongst students through whole school events
- all students are welcome to self-refer to the First Aid Coordinator, PLC Instructional Leaders, Assistant Principals 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
  - Values Program
  - Learning and Values Awards
  - Lunchtime clubs
  - School Wide Positive Behaviour Support
- programs, incursions and excursions developed to address specific behaviours (i.e. social skills program)
- opportunities for student inclusion (i.e. sports teams, recess and lunchtime clubs, Student Council and Student Leaders)
- buddy program

### Targeted

- each year level has a PLC Leader who monitors the health and wellbeing of students in their year, and act as a point of contact for students who may need additional support other than their classroom teacher
- 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, be linked with Lookout Centre and will be referred to Student Support Services for an Educational Needs Assessment
- 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

Mill Park 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 Learning Plan and/or a Behaviour Support Plan
- timetabling for PSD students to cater for specific needs and certain times of the day
- 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 Orange Door.

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
  - who are on the PSD program
  - in Out of Home Care
  - and with other complex needs that require ongoing support and monitoring from an external agency

## 4. Identifying students in need of support

Mill Park Primary School is committed to providing the necessary support to ensure our students are supported intellectually, emotionally and socially. The Wellbeing Team plays a significant role in developing and implementing strategies to help identify students in need of support and enhance student wellbeing. Mill Park 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 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 Vision and Mission statements and Values highlight 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

### CODE OF ETHICS

As a member of the school community at Mill Park Primary School we should all:

- Be polite, courteous and well mannered
- Exhibit and encourage pride in the school and present the school positively to the wider community
- Value and treat each other with respect regardless of gender, age, culture, role or religion
- Support an atmosphere of order and cooperation
- Support the school in its efforts to maintain a productive and progressive teaching and learning environment
- Present a positive role model within the school community
- Support rules, codes of practice and decisions made by the school
- Follow proper school procedures in any matters which concern us

Behavioural expectations of students, staff and families are grounded in our school's Values & Expectations. Student bullying behaviour will be responded to consistently with Mill Park Primary School's Bullying Prevention policy.

When a student acts in breach of the behaviour standards of our school community, Mill Park 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 the PLC Instructional Leader
- 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.



# Whole School Values & Expectations

The Mill Park Primary School community is committed to the implementation of our Mission and Vision Statements and the Values of Respect, Integrity, Compassion and Excellence.

	VALUE	At Mill Park Primary School we
Respect	<p><b>RESPECT IS:</b></p> <p><i>Being considerate and courteous to others</i></p>  <p>RESPECT</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• listen without judgement</li> <li>• follow school processes and rules</li> <li>• use school resources responsibly               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• care for each other</li> </ul> </li> <li>• care for the environment around us               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• value the opinions of others                   <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• share with others</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> <li>• accept others' beliefs and differences               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• include and encourage others</li> </ul> </li> <li>• conduct ourselves in a way that makes us proud               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• are responsible for our actions</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Integrity	<p><b>INTEGRITY is:</b></p> <p><i>Being honest and truthful, and keeping your word.</i></p>  <p>INTEGRITY</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• do what we say we will do               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• are trustworthy</li> </ul> </li> <li>• tell the truth even when we have made the wrong choice               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• follow school rules without being reminded                   <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• are sincere in our actions</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> <li>• are resilient and bounce back from difficulties               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• are fair and just towards others</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Compassion	<p><b>COMPASSION is:</b></p> <p><i>Being kind and showing empathy towards others.</i></p>  <p>COMPASSION</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• accept people as they are</li> <li>• take an interest in others</li> <li>• have zero tolerance towards bullying               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• speak to people in a caring way                   <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• help people whenever we can</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> <li>• support others to be the best they can be</li> <li>• give others a voice and freedom to be heard</li> <li>• form positive relationships with others</li> </ul>
Excellence	<p><b>EXCELLENCE is:</b></p> <p><i>Doing my best at all times and in all situations.</i></p>  <p>EXCELLENCE</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• strive for personal best</li> <li>• learn from our mistakes</li> <li>• work well independently</li> <li>• work well as a team member</li> <li>• are organised and persistent</li> <li>• accept challenges and never give up</li> <li>• encourage and support others to succeed</li> <li>• are thoughtful and curious learners               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• lead by example</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

## **7. Engaging with families**

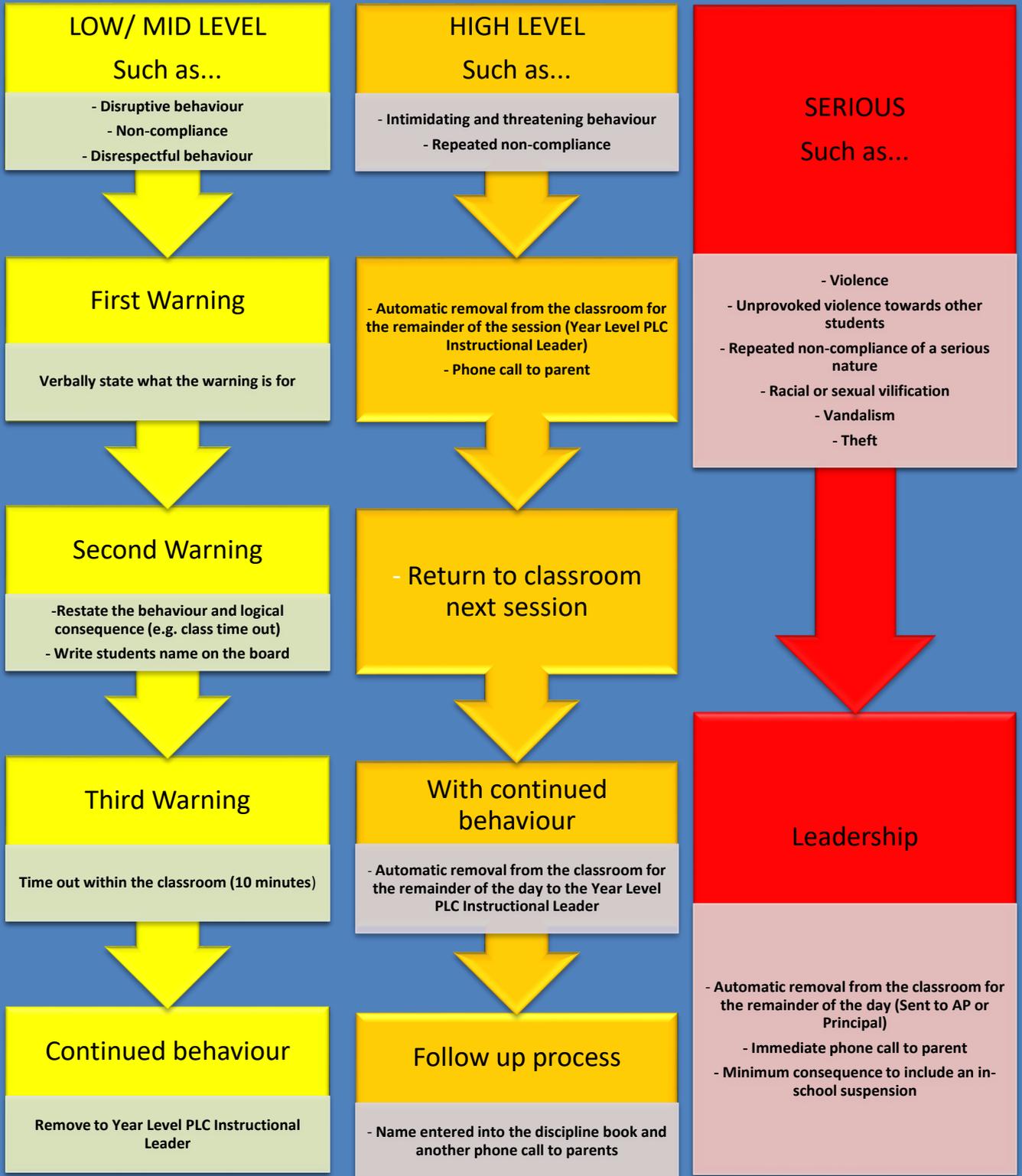
Mill Park Primary School values the input of parents and carers, and we will strive to support families to engage in their child's learning and build their capacity as active learners. We aim to be partners in learning with parents and carers in our school community.

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 home learning 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.



# CLASSROOM BEHAVIOUR MANAGEMENT FLOWCHART





# PLAYGROUND BEHAVIOUR MANAGEMENT FLOWCHART



## 8. Evaluation

Mill Park 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
- SOCS

## FURTHER INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

### Attendance

At Mill Park Primary School, absences often mean students miss important stages in the development of their learning, causing them to find 'catching up' difficult. Ultimately, our school goal is to have all students present and have our student absence mean below the previous year's state mean. The following are ways in which we promote school attendance:

- Attendance practices reflect DET philosophy of 'It's Not OK to be Away'.
- All student absences/lateness are recorded daily (morning and afternoon) by teachers, are aggregated on to our CASES 21/Compass database and communicated to DET.
- The school recognises illness as a reasonable ground for an absence.
- Clear written/verbal statements are made regularly to parents/carers/students about school and community attendance expectations.
- The Assistant Principal will closely monitor student attendance through the evaluation of the student absence reports on Compass.
- Ongoing data collection will be utilised to identify students who are at risk of poor attendance and possible disengagement from school.
- If within three days of the initial absence parents/carers have not provided an explanation/satisfactory explanation contact will be made by the classroom teacher or nominated representative.
- The Assistant Principals or the Principal will contact parents of students with high levels of unexplained or unapproved absences/lateness, with the view to developing and implementing strategies to minimise absences.
- Student attendance data will appear on the student's mid-year and end of year reports.
- DET and enrolment auditors will be given complete access to all student attendance records if requested.
- Whole-school modelling of punctuality is expected and regularly monitored with attendance awards.
- All absence notes and records of communication will be retained and stored at the school for a minimum period of 12 months.
- Ongoing unexplained absences/lateness, or lack of cooperation regarding student attendance will result in a formal attendance conference being organised. This may lead to the establishment of a Student Support Group Meeting.
- This Support Group will be convened by the Assistant Principal and attended by key professionals. An Attendance Improvement Plan may be developed. Unresolved attendance issues may be reported by the Principal to the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) or DET.
- Attendance is promoted through the school's weekly newsletter.

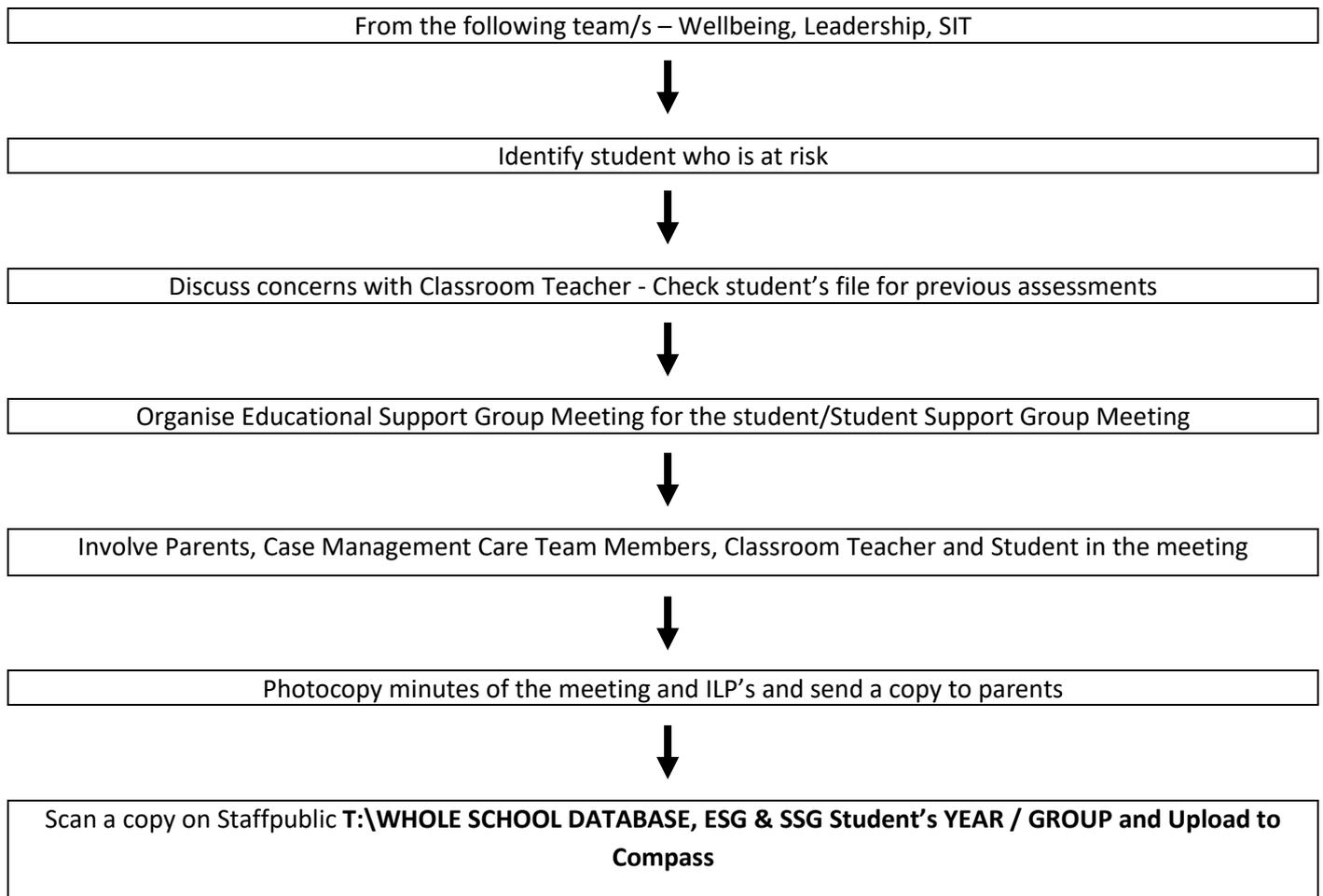
## Student Support Group (SSG) and Education Support Group (ESG) meetings

A Student Support Group meeting may be convened by schools to exchange information and facilitate solutions to behavioural problems or difficulties of students. In general, they will be convened at the school, although they could occur at alternative locations agreed to by the school and parents.

These meetings are to be held at a time suitable both to the school and to the parents. The purpose of procedures for such meetings will vary depending on the needs of individuals and schools, but they promote positive behaviours through a staged response. As well as teachers, parents and students, the meeting could involve a person requested by the parents who is not acting for fee or reward, principal or nominee and any support staff who have been involved with the student and/or the student's family or who have particular relevant expertise.

If the principal considers it warranted, or the student or the student's parents request, the principal must ensure suitable language interpretation facilities are made available. A brief written statement including a list of participants and agreed outcomes should be maintained to assist future problem-solving processes at the school. The statement should be verified by the parents and/or student and remain confidential.

### STUDENT SUPPORT GROUP MEETING (SSG) AND EDUCATION SUPPORT GROUP (ESG) FLOWCHART



## SUSPENSION

Suspension is the process of excluding a student from the standard instruction or educational opportunities being provided to other students at the school for part of a day, a full day, or multiple days.

Suspension is a serious disciplinary measure and is best reserved for incidents where other measures have not produced a satisfactory response. Before considering a suspension, schools should seek to understand the reasons for a student's behaviour and consider alternative educational and wellbeing supports and interventions that can be provided to the student to effectively address the reasons.

The procedures for suspension are set out in Ministerial Order 1125 and detailed further in this guidance.

Repeated or lengthy suspensions may not address the reasons for a student's behaviour and risk leading to poorer outcomes for a student's engagement in education, especially when suspension is used alone without supports and interventions that address the underlying reasons for the incident. The incidents may have occurred for a range of reasons including mental health concerns or circumstances at home, and the student may need additional help.

### **Authority to suspend a student**

Only principals have authority to make the final decision to suspend a student. This authority cannot be delegated.

School staff may provide advice to inform the principal's decision whether to suspend a student and may assist in the management of the student's behaviour and/or in communications with the parents, carers or relevant persons. Principals hold ultimate responsibility for ensuring that all processes are followed, correctly.

### **The relevant person**

Due to the seriousness of suspension and expulsion, Ministerial Order 1125 requires that students who are subject to suspension and/or expulsion processes have a 'relevant person' to participate in the process, provide support and advocate for them. For most students this will be a parent or carer.

In situations where the parent or carer is unavailable or unwilling to act as the relevant person for their child, they can nominate an alternative relevant person. For more information on this role, see [identifying a relevant person](#).

### ***Suspension of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students***

When considering a suspension for an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander student, a principal should engage a Koorie engagement support officer (KESO). The KESO can support the school and family to find the best outcome for the student, and connect the school and family to any local or regional supports.

For more information on supporting Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander students through a suspension process or to seek the involvement of a KESO, see [Koorie education coordinator contact details](#).

### ***Overseas students***

When considering appropriate discipline for overseas students, otherwise known as international students, it is important to note that the decision to suspend or expel may impact on a number of the student's visa conditions.

Such visa conditions include:

- the student must attend 80% of classes
- the student must make satisfactory progress

Schools enrolling international students are required to contact the International education division which manages the deferment, suspension and cancellation of international student enrolments.

For more information on International student program quality standard 13 - deferment, suspension or cancellation of study during enrolment, see [ISP quality standards and school resources](#).

### ***Students with separated parents***

For students who have separated parents, it is important to remember that suspension and expulsion are serious disciplinary measures and therefore all parents and carers are entitled to be notified of the intention to suspend or expel the student.

In circumstances where there is more than one parent or carer who would like to participate in the suspension and expulsion process, it is important to involve all of them in the process.

If the principal of a Victorian government school needs advice and assistance on how to proceed with the suspension or expulsion in these circumstances, it is strongly recommended that they contact us on (03) 9637 3146 or via email [legal.services@edumail.vic.gov.au](mailto:legal.services@edumail.vic.gov.au).

### **Grounds for suspension**

In order for suspension to be an option, the following conditions must be in place:

The student's behaviour must have occurred:

- whilst attending school
- or travelling to or from school
- or while engaged in any school activity away from the school
- or travelling to or from any school activity.

The student's behaviour must meet one or more of the following conditions:

- behaves in such a way as to pose a danger, whether actual, perceived or threatened, to the health, safety or wellbeing of any person
- causes significant damage to or destruction of property
- commits or attempts to commit or is knowingly involved in the theft of property
- possesses, uses or sells or deliberately assists another person to possess, use or sell illicit substances or weapons
- fails to comply with any clear and reasonable instruction of a staff member so as to pose a danger, whether actual, perceived or threatened, to the health, safety or wellbeing of any person
- consistently engages in behaviour that vilifies, defames, degrades or humiliates another person based on age; breastfeeding; gender; identity; impairment; industrial activity; lawful sexual activity; marital status; parent/carer status or status as a carer; physical features; political belief or activity; pregnancy; race; religious belief or activity; sex; sexual orientation; personal association (whether as a relative or otherwise) with a person who is identified by reference to any of the above attributes
- consistently behaves in an unproductive manner that interferes with the wellbeing, safety or educational opportunities of any other student

Note: for incidents between students that occur outside of school hours or in locations other than those listed above, a suspension cannot be used as a response. The impact of cyberbullying (and other behaviours) outside of school hours/off school premises on schools is acknowledged, however, if the behaviour occurs solely outside of school hours/grounds suspension is not an available recourse. If incidents outside of school hours are connected to behaviour that does meet the grounds and location requirements for suspension, this external behaviour may be considered when determining the response to an in-school incident.

### **Determine if suspension is an option**

Suspension is a serious disciplinary measure and is best reserved for incidents when other measures have not produced a satisfactory response.

A principal may only suspend a student if the location and nature of their behaviour meets certain conditions. For information on when suspension may be an option, see 'Grounds for Suspension' under [suspension considerations](#).

## Conduct a preliminary investigation

The principal should conduct a thorough investigation to establish the nature of the behaviour/s, the student who committed those behaviour/s, the context in which it was committed, and any other relevant circumstances in relation to the incident or behaviour.

The principal must [identify the student's relevant person](#) in accordance with part 2 of the Ministerial Order.

## Consider options

When determining if suspension is appropriate for a particular student, consideration should be given to:

- the behaviour for which suspension is being considered
- the educational needs of the student
- any disability of the student (disability is defined under the Equal Opportunity Act 2010, it is not limited to students in receipt of specialist services or Program for Students with Disability funding)
- the age of the student
- the residential and social circumstances of the student, including whether the student is Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander or culturally and linguistically diverse background or is in out of home care
- previous incidences of challenging behaviour and the support/disciplinary measures employed to respond to these.

For more information, see [responding to challenging behaviour](#) and [strategies and supports available to schools](#).

Before proceeding a suspension the principal must ensure the following:

- that the student has had the opportunity to be heard
- that any information or documentation provided by the student or the relevant person has been taken into account in making the decision regarding the suspension; and
- other forms of action to address the behaviour for which the student is being suspended have been considered.

Schools should also consider alternative interventions and supports that can be provided to the student to address the reasons for the behaviour before proceeding to suspension.

## Next steps: decision, notification and action

In making their decision, the principal should consider their [legal obligations](#) and [principles of administrative decision making](#).

Under Victorian Law, in deciding whether to suspend a student, principals must undertake an assessment of that course of action under the Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006.

In addition, when determining whether to suspend a student with a disability, principals must be sure that reasonable adjustments have been made to assist the student to manage the behaviours where this is a manifestation of disability.

If the behaviour of a student meets the grounds for suspension and the principal decides to suspend, he or she must determine:

- whether the suspension will be undertaken in school or out of school
- the day on which the suspension will commence (including whether it will be an immediate suspension)
- the period of suspension.

For information to guide these decisions, see [suspension considerations](#).

Prior to the suspension taking effect, or on the day of taking immediate action, the principal must complete all of the following:

1. Identify the relevant person in accordance with part 2 of the Ministerial Order
2. Notify the student (verbally) and the relevant person (via telephone or in person) of the reason/s for the suspension, the school days on which the suspension shall occur where the suspension will occur
3. Provide contact details for additional support services to the student and the relevant person as appropriate
4. Arrange for appropriate school work to be provided to the student for the period of the suspension as follows, where the student is suspended for:
  - three days or less, provide meaningful work
  - more than three days, develop a student absence learning plan and return to school plan
  - more than five days, in addition to the above requirements, a teacher should be designated as a key point of contact for the student and their family.
5. Provide the student and the relevant person with a Notice of Suspension which must include:
  - the reasons for the suspension
  - the school days on which the suspension shall occur
  - and copies of the student absence learning plan and return to school plan (if required)
6. Provide the student and their relevant person with a copy of the parent brochure - procedures following suspension. Consistent with the charter and discrimination legislation, documentation should be provided in alternative formats and community languages in order to meet the communication needs of the student and relevant person
7. Record the suspension on CASES21. For support to record the suspension in CASES21 refer to Chapter 6 merit and discipline in the CASES21 administration guide at [About CASES21](#)

It is important to discuss the reasons for the suspension with the student so that they understand why it is happening and what needs to change. Giving the student the opportunity to have a voice and influence in the discussion helps to foster their engagement in the process. This engagement enables the student to take ownership over and make changes to their behaviour.

### **Final steps: post-suspension follow up and support**

The principal should consider whether it is appropriate to convene a student support group meeting with the student, the relevant person, and any other adults or professionals involved in the care of the student. The purpose of such a meeting is to discuss the student's behaviour that led to the suspension, and to discuss a range of strategies to address the concerns and prevent further occurrences of such behaviour.

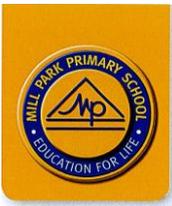
It is strongly recommended that a meeting be convened if one or more of the following circumstances apply:

- a student and/or their relevant person requests a meeting
- a student has a disability, is Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander or is in out-of-home care
- there have been three or more suspensions in the school year
- the student has been suspended for the maximum five consecutive days.

For more information on student support groups, see [engagement strategies for individual students](#)

In all cases of suspension, it is important to consider the student's transition back into school and any disruption to their learning. In many cases, the student will require additional educational or other supports to help address the reasons for the incident and/or any underlying behavioural issues.

Repeated or lengthy suspensions may not address the reasons for a student's behaviour and risks leading to poorer outcomes for a student's engagement in education, especially when suspension is used alone without interventions and supports that address the underlying reasons for the incident(s).



# Mill Park Primary School

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## Notice of Suspension

School Information	
<b>School Name:</b> Mill Park Primary School	
<b>School Number:</b> 5160	<b>School Phone Number:</b> 03 9404 3337
<b>Contact person name:</b> Lu Alessi (Principal)	
Student Contact Information	
<b>Name:</b>	<b>Year Level:</b>
<b>Address:</b>	
	<b>Phone:</b>
<b>Email:</b>	
Parent/carer details	
<b>Name:</b>	<b>Relationship to student:</b>
<b>Address:</b>	
<b>Mobile Phone:</b>	<b>Home Phone:</b>
<b>Email:</b>	
Suspension details	
<b>Current suspension:</b>	
<b>Previous suspension/s (if any) in this school year</b>	From _____ to _____ (inclusive)
<b>Previous suspension/s (if any) in previous school years</b>	From _____ to _____ (inclusive)
Secondary consultation and/or direct intervention support must be sought from the regional office to address the behavioral concerns for a student who has been suspended for eight days in a school year or who reaches a total of four individual suspensions in a school year.	
<b>Reasons for suspension:</b> Under Ministerial Order 184, this student was suspended for (please circle):	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Behaving in such a way as to pose a danger, whether actual, perceived or threatened, to the health, safety or wellbeing of any person;</li><li>Causing significant damage to or destruction of property;</li><li>Committing or attempting to commit or is knowingly involved in the theft of property;</li><li>Possessing, using or selling or deliberately assisting another person to possess, use or sell illicit substances or weapons;</li><li>Failing to comply with any clear and reasonable instruction of a staff member so as to pose a danger, whether actual, perceived or threatened, to the health, safety or wellbeing of any person;</li></ul>	

- Consistently engaging in behaviour that vilifies, defames, degrades or humiliates another person based on age;; gender; identity; impairment; industrial activity; lawful sexual activity; parental status; physical features; political belief or activity; race; religious belief or activity; personal association (whether as a relative or otherwise) with a person who is identified by reference to any of the above attributes;
- Consistently behaving in an unproductive manner that interferes with the wellbeing, safety or educational opportunities of any other student.

### Explanation of the circumstances leading to suspension

### Outcomes of the student support groups

Date/s of student support groups:

Attendees:

Strategies discussed:

Supports (school based or external) provided to the student:

Date of post-suspension student support group  
(only required if suspension is for five school days):

Additional information (if required)

### Checklist

Each of these boxes must be ticked and the Notice of Suspension endorsed by the Principal before the student can be suspended.

Student absence learning plan agreed upon at student support group is attached (for documentation purposes) and has been provided to the student and their parents/carers.

- All other relevant information is attached.
- A copy of the Notice of Suspension has been provided to the student, parents/carer and the School Council President.
- The student and their parents/careers have been provided with a copy of the information brochure Procedures for Suspension.

Principal \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

## Expulsion overview

On rare occasions, an individual student's behaviour may compromise the health, safety and wellbeing of other students and staff at the school.

When a behavioural incident is of such magnitude that an expulsion is considered, it is important that:

- a transparent, fair and supportive process is in place
- there are appropriate checks and balances at each stage.

The expulsion process has a focus on procedural fairness and comprehensive support for all students.

It aims to ensure that:

- opportunities are provided to consider the effect of a student's behaviour on all affected parties
- decisions are informed by the safety, wellbeing and educational interests of the student and the school community
- vulnerable students are appropriately supported.

Deciding to expel a student is rare. If this decision is made, the principal and Department will work closely with the student and their family. They will ensure the student and family are supported to successfully transition to a new educational setting as soon as possible.

## Grounds for expulsion

Expulsion may be considered if the student:

- behaves in such a way as to pose a danger, whether actual, perceived or threatened, to the health, safety or wellbeing of any person
- causes significant damage to or destruction of property
- commits or attempts to commit or is knowingly involved in the theft of property
- possesses, uses or sells or deliberately assists another person to possess, use or sell illicit substances or weapons
- fails to comply with any clear and reasonable instruction of a staff member so as to pose a danger, whether actual, perceived or threatened, to the health, safety or wellbeing of any person
- consistently engages in behaviour that vilifies, defames, degrades or humiliates another person based on:
  - age
  - gender
  - identity
  - impairment
  - lawful sexual activity
  - parent or carer status
  - physical features
  - political belief or activity
  - race
  - religious belief or activity
  - sexual orientation
- personal association (whether as a relative or otherwise) with a person who is identified by reference to any of the above attributes.
- consistently behaves in an unproductive manner that interferes with the wellbeing, safety or educational opportunities of any other student.

The behaviour must have occurred whilst:

- attending school
- travelling to and from school
- engaging in any school related activity away from school, including when travelling to or from that activity.

The student's behaviour must also be of such magnitude that expulsion is the only available mechanism.

The principal must have regard to the need of the student to receive an education compared to the need to maintain the:

- the health, safety and wellbeing of other students and staff at the school
- effectiveness of the school's educational programs.

### **Considering human rights and anti-discrimination obligations**

When the principal is making a decision about whether to expel a student they must consider and comply with:

- the Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006
- anti-discrimination legislation.

The principal must consider the implications for the people affected. A decision about expulsion may affect the rights of several people. In those cases, different rights and interests must be balanced.

If you're intending to take a decision or action which will limit a right under the charter, contact the Department's Legal Division. They can help to assess whether the limit is reasonable and justified. Phone on 9637 3146 or email [legal.services@edumail.vic.gov.au](mailto:legal.services@edumail.vic.gov.au)

### **Authority to expel**

Only principals have authority to make a decision to expel a student. This authority cannot be delegated.

Principals are encouraged to engage their regional engagement coordinator and the local area team to ensure the best outcome is reached.

When making a decision, the principal must properly, fairly and without bias consider all relevant matters. This includes the impact of the behaviour of the student on other affected parties.

The secretary of the Department must approve a principal's decision to expel a student aged eight years or less. This is because the Department recognises the importance of supporting very young students to remain engaged in education.

### **Removing a student from school while considering an expulsion**

The principal may decide that the student should be suspended from school immediately while an expulsion is being considered. This may happen if the student's behaviour is putting the health, safety and wellbeing of themselves or any other person at significant risk. The principal must follow the suspension process set out in Ministerial Order 1125.

### **Students in out-of-home-care**

Students in out-of-home care face additional barriers to engaging in education. Many of these students have experienced trauma and multiple transitions between schools as a result of their living arrangements.

If a student in out-of-home care is being considered for expulsion, the relevant regional director must be notified. This is so the obligations in the Out-of-home care education commitment can be met.

In addition to advising the regional director, the principal should:

- ensure the Education support guarantee has been delivered on. This includes arranging for an educational needs assessment and appointing a learning mentor.
- work with the DHHS Care Team and learning mentor to understand the impact that trauma may have on the student's behaviours, and any underlying needs
- contact the Lookout Education Support Centre in their region for advice on available supports.

For more information, see [LOOKOUT Education Support Centers](#).

### **Koorie students**

Some Koorie students face increased barriers to engagement in education. In addition to advising the regional director, the principal can seek additional support for Koorie students through their local area team or regional engagement coordinator.

Principals must advise the regional director if they are considering expelling a Koorie student.

For information on the Department's dedicated Koorie workforce, see [Koorie education coordinators](#).

Principals should also let families know that they can contact the [Victorian Aboriginal Education Association Incorporated](#). (VAEAI) directly for independent support on 9481 0800.

### **Students with a disability**

Principals must advise the regional director if they are considering an expulsion for a student who is eligible for funding under the Program for Students with Disabilities

For any students with a disability, the principal should also seek support from their local area team to consider if:

- the student's behaviour is a symptom or manifestation of their disability
- the student could be supported to remain and positively engage at the school with appropriate intervention and support
- reasonable adjustments have been made to support the student to participate in their education on the same basis as their peers without a disability.

### **International students**

The principal must contact the International Education Division on 9637 2990. The decision to expel may impact on the student's visa conditions.

This will ensure that the necessary transition arrangements and implications for the student's visa can be managed. It will also ensure that the Department complies with its obligations as a registered CRICOS provider under Commonwealth legislation.

For more information see International Student Program quality standard 13 - Deferment, suspension or cancellation of study during enrolment, see [ISP quality standards and school](#)

### **REVIEW CYCLE**

This policy was last updated on 7<sup>th</sup> February 2019 and is scheduled for review in 2022.