Top of the Range
MT BLOWHARD
PRIMARY SCHOOL

Quality Rural Education

Mount Blowhard Primary School, 527 Millers Road, Blowhard, Victoria 3352
Phone 03 5334 6354 **Email** mount.blowhard.ps@edumail.vic.gov.au

Mount Blowhard Primary School
Student Wellbeing & Engagement Policy

HELP FOR NON-ENGLISH SPEAKERS
If you need help to understand the information in this policy please contact the school office on 5334 6354.

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.

Mount Blowhard Primary School is committed to providing a safe, secure and stimulating learning environment for all students. We understand that students reach their full potential only when they are happy, healthy and safe, and that a positive school culture, where student participation is encouraged and valued, helps to engage students and support them in their learning. Our school acknowledges that student wellbeing and student learning outcomes are closely linked.

The objective of this policy is to support our school to create and maintain a safe, supportive and inclusive school environment consistent with our school's values.

SCOPE
This policy applies to all school activities, including camps and excursions.

CONTENTS
1. School profile
2. School values, philosophy and vision
3. Wellbeing and engagement strategies
4. Identifying students in need of support
5. Student rights and responsibilities
6. Student behavioural expectations and management
7. Engaging with families
8. Evaluation

POLICY
1. School profile
Mount Blowhard Primary School is government primary school located approximately 15 kilometers north of Ballarat and is an integral part of the local community. The school's current enrolment is around 80 students, across five classrooms. There are 14 staff members-teaching and non-teaching (full time and part

time). The school demographics consists of a Student Family Occupation and Education (SFOE) index of 0.36 with a SFOE band of low-medium.

Mount Blowhard Primary School has a proud history spanning over 140 years. From a small rural school, we attract enrolments from a wider area, reflecting housing growth on the outskirts of Ballarat. We value and promote strong home-school partnerships and connections within the wider community.

The four main classrooms are spacious and include staff administration areas. The rooms all have new large Smart televisions and wireless technology. They have been recently refurbished. The school is fortunate to have a full-size gymnasium and attached multipurpose room, with a kitchen area. The multipurpose room has recently operated as a fifth classroom, or an Out of Hours School Care (OHSC) space. The school grounds are spacious, providing many recreational or relaxing options for students during recess and lunchtimes. The children have access to a soccer pitch, football oval, tennis courts, green areas, playgrounds, cubbies and the Glen Brae building (set-up as a quiet space). Our well-resourced school is set on large grounds with room for our students to run and play.

Our learning programs and school events respect the history and traditions of our rural community. The school is in a wonderful position to provide the best of both worlds – a rural education within reach of the city.

Our School Vision is to ensure that all students achieve their academic, social, emotional and physical potential in a supportive and purposeful learning environment, where our school values of Respect, Responsibility, Excellence and Kindness underpin all interactions. Our School Values are supported by our School Rules: Be Honest, Be Safe, Be Nice, Be Positive, and Be a Learner.

The school is committed to evidence-based best practice. Our literacy and numeracy programs align with evidence-based teaching practices and deliver excellent results for all students. The science of learning, cognitive load theory and explicit direct instruction inform our pedagogy, classroom practice and professional learning.

The wellbeing of all students, families and staff is greatly valued. We have many practices in place to ensure an inclusive, caring and safe school environment for all. Mount Blowhard Primary School implements the School Wide Positive Behaviour framework. This approach focuses on identifying, teaching and rewarding the behaviours we want to see in students

.

Our school has a positive and accepting culture where effort is valued, and all students know the importance of trying their best. Each class engages in wellbeing lessons. These lessons incorporate content from the Respectful Relationships program. The Resilience Project also forms part of our wellbeing lessons. This will include an increased emphasis on practicing gratitude, empathy and mindfulness.

Part-time specialist teaching staff ensure a balanced and well-rounded curriculum, delivering programs in Physical Education, The Arts (visual arts and music) and Chinese. MARC Van provides a fortnightly library service for borrowing and returning of literature and the delivery of history or literature lessons.
We also provide Multisensory Structured Language (MSL) intervention for students at risk. The students have access to a plethora of extracurricular opportunities to ensure a broad and well-rounded education.
We believe in developing leadership skills in our students. Juniors are inspired to learn from older students as they lead assemblies, speak in public, greet visitors, thank guests, and perform in public.

The school has an engaged and active School Council and Parents and Friends committees that demonstrate great pride of the community and school. They ensures a multitude of opportunities for families to come together for community events such: Colour Run, Musical Bingo, Movie Night, Father's Day evening, Mother's Day afternoon tea, School Production, our annual Spring Fete (organised and run by Year 5/6 students), Christmas Concert……the list goes on.

2. School values, philosophy and vision

Our School Vision is to ensure that all students achieve their academic, social, emotional and physical potential in a supportive and purposeful learning environment, where our school values of Respect, Responsibility, Excellence and Kindness underpin all interactions. Our school believes in high expectations for all students in an atmosphere of care and support. We are committed to preparing our students to be creative, adaptable and responsible citizens of both their local and global community.

3. Wellbeing and engagement strategies

Mount Blowhard Primary School has developed a range of strategies to promote engagement, an inclusive and safe environment, positive behaviour, and respectful relationships for all students and staff in our school. We recognise the importance of student friendships and peer support in helping children and students feel safe and less isolated. We acknowledge that some students may need extra social, emotional or educational support at school, and that the needs of students will change over time as they grow and learn.

A summary of the universal (whole of school), targeted (year group specific) and individual engagement strategies used by our school is included below:

Universal

- high and consistent expectations of all staff, students, and parents and carers
- 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 and that embraces and celebrates diversity and empowers all students to participate and feel valued
- welcoming all parents/carers and being responsive to them as partners in learning
- analysing and being responsive to a range of school data such as attendance, Attitudes to School Survey, parent survey data, student management data and school level assessment data
- teachers at Mount Blowhard Primary School use an Explicit Direct Instruction (EDI) instructional framework to ensure a common and shared model of evidenced-based instruction
- teachers at Mount Blowhard 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
- 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
- twice a term, the School Wide Positive Behaviour Superstar Award (SWPB Superstar) acknowledges outstanding behaviour
- monitor student attendance and implement attendance improvement strategies when required
- students have the opportunity to contribute to and provide feedback on decisions about school operations through the Student Representative Council
- create opportunities for cross—age connections amongst students through House activities

- all students are welcome to self-refer to their classroom teacher or the Principal if they would like to discuss a particular issue or feel as though they may need support of any kind. We are proud to have an 'open door' policy
- we engage in school wide positive behaviour support with our staff and students, which includes frameworks and programs such as The Resilience Project, Respectful Relationships and the School Wide Positive Behaviour (SWPB) framework
- when required, programs, incursions and excursions are sourced to address specific needs
- opportunities for student inclusion (i.e., sports teams and lunchtime clubs)
- buddy program
- measures are in place to empower our school community to identify, report and address inappropriate and harmful behaviours such as racism, homophobia and other forms of discrimination or harassment.
- strategically utilising the Mental Health Fund to support staff, students and families, this is currently in the form of a Wellbeing and Inclusive Education role being established
-

Targeted

- Koorie students are supported to engage fully in their education, in a positive learning environment that understands and appreciates the strength of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture. They have an Individual Education Plan and Student Support Group (SSG) meetings as required.
- all students in Out of Home Care are supported in accordance with the Department's policy on Supporting Students in Out-of-Home Care including being appointed a Learning Mentor, having an Individual Education Plan and a Student Support Group (SSG) and being referred to Student Support Services for an Educational Needs Assessment
- students with a disability are supported to be able to engage fully in their learning and school activities in accordance with the Department's policy on Students with Disability, such as through reasonable adjustments to support access to learning programs, consultation with families and where required, student support groups and individual education plans
- Our English as a second language students are supported through daily systematic synthetic phonics and tutoring (as required), and all cultural and linguistically diverse students are supported to feel safe and included in our school including through Respectful Relationships and The Resilience Project lessons
- We provide a positive and respectful learning environment for our students who identify as LGBTIQ+ and follow the Department's policy
-

Individual

- building constructive relationships with students at risk or students who are vulnerable due to complex individual circumstances
- meeting with student and their parent/carer to talk about how best to help the student engage with school
- developing an Individual Education Plan and/or a Behaviour Support Plan
- considering if any environmental changes need to be made, for example changing the classroom set up
- referring the student to:
    - school-based wellbeing supports
    - Student Support Services

- Appropriate external supports such as council-based youth and family services, other allied health professionals, headspace, child and adolescent mental health services or ChildFirst
- CAFS

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
- engaging with our regional Koorie Education Support Officers
- running regular Student Support Group meetings for all students:
  - with a disability
  - in Out of Home Care
  - with other complex needs that require ongoing support and monitoring.

Student Support Group meetings (each term) for students deemed at risk. These meetings are often attended by key allied health professionals.

Students deemed at risk academically, socially and or emotionally have three Individual Education Plans (IEPs) developed and reviewed throughout the year.

Further details about the strategies that support and promote individual engagement can be found below:

- Student Support Groups
- Individual Education Plans
- Behaviour Support Plans
- Student Support Services

as well as to other Department programs and services such as:

- Program for Students with Disabilities
- Mental health toolkit
- LOOKOUT

4. Identifying students in need of support

Mount Blowhard Primary School is committed to providing the necessary support to ensure our students are supported intellectually, emotionally and socially. The staff as a whole play a significant role in developing and implementing strategies help identify students in need of support and enhance student wellbeing. Mount Blowhard Primary School will utilise the following information and tools to identify students in need of extra emotional, social or educational support:

- personal, health and learning information gathered upon enrolment and while the student is enrolled
- attendance records
- academic performance
- observations by school staff such as changes in engagement, behaviour, self-care, social connectedness and motivation
- attendance, detention and suspension data
- engagement with families
- self-referrals or referrals from peers

5. Student rights and responsibilities

All members of our school community have a right to experience a safe and supportive school environment. We expect that all students, staff, parents and carers treat each other with respect and dignity. Our school's Statement of Values highlights the rights and responsibilities of members of our community.
Students have the right to:

- participate fully in their education
- feel safe, secure and happy at school
- learn in an environment free from bullying, harassment, violence, racism, discrimination or intimidation
- express their ideas, feelings and concerns.

Students have the responsibility to:

- participate fully in their educational program
- display positive behaviours that demonstrate respect for themselves, their peers, their teachers and members of the school community
- respect the right of others to learn.

Students who may have a complaint or concern about something that has happened at school are encouraged to speak to their parents or carers and approach a trusted teacher or a member of the school leadership team. Further information about raising a complaint or concern is available in our Complaints Policy.

6. Student behavioural expectations and management

Violence, bullying, and other offensive and harmful behaviours such as racism, harassment and discrimination will not be tolerated and will be managed in accordance with Mount Blowhard Primary School policy. Bullying will be managed in accordance with our Bullying Prevention Policy.

When a student acts in breach of the behaviour standards of our school community, Mount Blowhard Primary School will institute a staged response, consistent with the Department's policies on behaviour, discipline and student wellbeing and engagement. Where appropriate, parents will be informed about the inappropriate behaviour and the disciplinary action taken by teachers and other school staff.

Our school considers, explores and implements positive and non-punitive interventions to support student behaviour before considering disciplinary measures such as detention, withdrawal of privileges or withdrawal from class.

Disciplinary measures may be used as part of a staged response to inappropriate behaviour in combination with other engagement and support strategies to ensure that factors that may have contributed to the student's behaviour are identified and addressed. Disciplinary measures at our school will be applied fairly and consistently. Students will always be provided with an opportunity to be heard.

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
- restorative practices
- detentions
- behaviour support and intervention meetings
- suspension
- expulsion

The Mount Blowhard Primary School code of conduct……..

As stated in the Mount Blowhard Primary School Code of Conduct, the steps below outline our whole school approach to breaches of behaviour standards by students:

In the classroom:

Step 1. Reminder of expectation
Step 2. Name on the board
Step 3. Mark next to name (5 minutes in at recess or lunch time)
Step 4. Time out in another classroom
Step 5. Continued inappropriate behaviour will result in a student being sent to the office to speak with the Principal.

In the yard:

Step 1. Reminder of expectation
Step 2. Walk with the yard duty teacher for 5 minutes
Step 3. Time out in the office
Step 4. Student play time is restricted
Step 5. Continued inappropriate behaviour will result in a student being sent to the office to speak with the Principal.

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 Mount Blowhard Primary School is responsible for ensuring all suspensions and expulsions are recorded on CASES21.
Corporal punishment is prohibited by law and will not be used in any circumstance at our school.

7. Engaging with families

Mount Blowhard Primary School values the input of parents and carers, and we will strive to support families to engage in their child's learning and build their capacity as active learners. We aim to be partners in learning with parents and carers in our school community.
We work hard to create successful partnerships with parents and carers by:

- ensuring that all parents have access to our school policies and procedures, available on our school website
- maintaining an open, respectful line of communication between parents and staff, supported by our Communicating with School Staff policy.
- providing parent volunteer opportunities so that families can contribute to school activities
- involving families with homework and other curriculum-related activities
- involving families in school decision making
- coordinating resources and services from the community for families
- including families in Student Support Groups, and developing individual plans for students.

8. Evaluation

Mount Blowhard 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 (Attitudes to School Survey)

- incidents data (GradeXpert)
- parent survey (Parent Opinion Survey)
- attendance and absence data
- Student Online Case System (SOCS)

Mount Blowhard Primary School will also regularly monitor available data dashboards to ensure any wellbeing or engagement issues are acted upon in a timely manner and any intervention occurs as soon as possible.

COMMUNICATION

This policy will be communicated to our school community in the following ways:

- Available publicly on our school's website
- Included in staff induction processes
- 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

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

- Attendance
- Student Engagement
- Child Safe Standards
- Supporting Students in Out-of-Home Care
- Students with Disability
- LGBTIQ Student Support
- Behaviour - Students
- Suspensions
- Expulsions
- Restraint and Seclusion

The following school policies are also relevant to this Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy:

- Child Safety Policy
- Bullying Prevention Policy
- Inclusion and Diversity Policy
- Statement of Values and School Philosophy

REVIEW CYCLE AND EVALUATION

This policy was endorsed by school council on March 20th 2025. It is scheduled for review in 2027. The recommended minimum review cycle for this policy is every one-two years.