

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.

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

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

SCOPE

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

CONTENTS

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

POLICY

1. School profile

Murtoa College:

Geographic location: Murtoa College is a Foundation to year 12 school situated 300 kilometres north-west of Melbourne, and approximately 30 kilometres east of Horsham. As well as drawing students from the local area Murtoa College also has approximately 60 students who pay to travel by bus each day from Horsham. The school services a wide area that ranges east to west from Horsham to Rupanyup (45 kilometres) and north to south from Minyip to Glenorchy (about 50 kilometres).

Size of college: The enrolment numbers have been stable, varying between 260 and 280 students in the last 10 years. Our feeder schools are Minyip Primary School, Rupanyup Primary School and Our Lady Help of Christians School and students from Horsham. Students from Horsham come from all the primary schools in Horsham. The college has 90 students in years F-6 and 187 students in years 7-12.

Buses: About 85% of students travel to school by bus from the surrounding farming areas and towns, including Horsham.

Classes and Teachers: Currently there are 5 combined classes in years F-6 with a total of 90 students. There are two classes at each year level in years 7-8 then an elective program in years 9-12 with a total of 187 students. Classes at VCE in year 11 and 12 have small numbers in all subject areas. Some students do VCE subjects via virtual offerings. In 2021 Murtoa College, Baimbridge College in Hamilton and Mortlake College have combined to deliver 9 VCE subject in a cluster through Webex. This is a must if we are to maintain pathways and keep our retention rate up. The college has 33 teaching staff plus 19 education support staff. Within this figure there are many part timers.

Curriculum Provision: Murtoa College supports its students through our teaching and learning program. The students are familiarised with and use a common language of learning. Students are encouraged to think about how they are going with their work in each class, where their learning is taking them in future lessons, and how they are going to get there. Learning intentions and success criteria are used consistently and explicitly in each class to assist students with their thinking and learning.

A feature of the curriculum is the strong emphasis placed on the school values. The values are not a mere 'add on' to the curriculum but are embedded in each classroom and are an integral part of all aspects of the school culture. Foremost among the school values is 'Respect', and each classroom encourages an environment consistent with the school's motto of "Respectful relationships in every situation".

Throughout their years of schooling our students are offered a diverse range of subjects that span the Victorian Curriculum and provide opportunities for students with differing backgrounds and interests. Developing the Literacy and Numeracy skills of our students is a priority from Foundation to Year 12, and these skills are explicitly taught in each subject area. Regardless of their level of achievement, each student is instilled with a growth mind-set and encouraged to develop their own skills to an appropriate level. Our staff use a range of diagnostic and summative assessments to meet this end, regularly administering and analysing results alongside our NAPLAN figures.

Students have their progress measured and reported on regularly through the implementation of various assessment processes in each class. Results from these assessments are reported to students and parents on an ongoing basis on the Murtoa College's online Student Management Tool - XUNO. This allows the school to provide regular meaningful feedback for all students and demonstrate that learning is taking place in each class. Murtoa College aims to involve its wider community and keep lines of communication between teachers, students and parents open. Providing consistent updates on the teaching and learning program taking place throughout the year allows the school community to take a more active role in the development of our students.

In the years 7-12 area the college offers a diverse program and a comprehensive year 11 and 12 program including VCE, VCAL and VET. At years 9 and 10 students complement their core studies of English, Maths and Science with a wide and varied selection of elective subjects. Students at these year levels complete individualised programs that offer breadth and depth across each of the learning areas and provide distinct pathways into the senior years. Instrumental music lessons are available in years F-12. IT, Art, German, Physical Education and Science are delivered as specialist subjects in the years F-6 area with all other domains covered by classroom teachers. A variety of extra support programs are provided across the college to support students in need. These include MYLNS, Tutoring, Quick Smart, Hands on Learning and CAFE reading recovery.

Well Being: A comprehensive wellbeing program supports all students, including those with disabilities, mental health and other special needs. A counsellor attends regularly to provide support to students in years F-12. Our wellbeing coordinator is an ES staff member.

Cluster: The school belongs to the Dunmunkle cluster (a group of local small primary schools), as well as the West Wimmera CEP cluster. We are also part of the West Wimmera Schools Network and a member of the Wimmera and Southern Mallee (WASM) Local Learning and Employment Network (LLEN), and the WASM careers, VET and VCAL groups.

Facilities and Infrastructure: Murtoa College arose from the amalgamation of Murtoa Primary School and Murtoa Secondary College in 2001 and has been continually developed to improve the learning environment. Capital works to allow the primary students to move to the secondary site were completed in 2003. In 2006 the canteen, the food technology, the science, the information technology and the leading schools fund (LSF) buildings were constructed, giving the school state of the art facilities in all these areas. The food technology and science buildings were

constructed in a unique arc design out of rendered straw bales and feature many environmentally conscious features. In 2010 three new primary classrooms were constructed under the building the education revolution (BER) funding. The college now has a 60kw solar system which provides most of the power required to run the college daily. This has kept Murtoa College at the forefront of innovation in building design and sustainability. The school has also invested heavily in ICT resources such as TV's, Interactive whiteboards and video conferencing equipment (Webex).

2. School values, philosophy and vision

Vision:

For students to develop skills that enable them to succeed in everyday life and pursue their aspirations and passions. We aim to nurture students to become respectful, compassionate and tolerant citizens, ready to contribute to their community.

Mission:

Inspiring Young Minds to grow into Lifelong Learners.

Collective Commitment:

We will work professionally and collaboratively by following our expectations and implementing college initiatives.

Objectives:

- To improve the learning growth of all students in all areas.
- All students are motivated in their learning. They have a strong sense of belonging and connectedness to the college and their peers.
- To maintain a safe and respectful environment for the whole college community.
- To effectively allocate and use resources (human, physical and financial) to achieve the goals in Achievement, Engagement and Wellbeing.

Values:

Respect

- to value ourselves and others
- to treat others as we like to be treated
- to look after our belongings and our world

Enthusiasm

- being excited and positive
- giving 100% to all you do

Honesty

- being open and trustworthy
- being truthful in your words and actions

Responsibility

- others can depend on you
- if you make a mistake, you make amends, not excuses

Cooperation

- working together for the good of everyone

Courtesy

- being polite and respectful to others

Caring

- giving love and attention to people and things that matter to you

Friendliness

- being a friend
- taking an interest in other people
- making others feel welcome

Excellence

- doing your best
- aiming for the highest standard or level

Commitment

- the ability to make decisions and follow through on them
- to care deeply

3. Engagement strategies

Murtoa College has developed a range of strategies to promote engagement, positive behaviour and respectful relationships for all students in our school. We acknowledge that some students may need extra social, emotional or educational support at school, and that the needs of students will change over time as they grow and learn.

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

Universal

- high and consistent expectations of all staff, students and parents and carers
- prioritise positive relationships between staff and students, recognising the fundamental role this plays in building and sustaining student wellbeing
- creating a culture that is inclusive, engaging and supportive
- welcoming all parents/carers and being responsive to them as partners in learning
- analysing and being responsive to a range of school data such as attendance, Attitudes to School Survey, parent survey data, student management data and school level assessment data
- deliver a broad curriculum including VET programs, VCE and VCAL to ensure that students can choose subjects and programs that are tailored to their interests, strengths and aspirations
- teachers at Murtoa College use the 'GENAR' instructional framework to ensure an explicit, common and shared model of instruction to ensure that evidenced-based, high yield teaching practices are incorporated into all lessons
- teachers at Murtoa College adopt a broad range of teaching and assessment approaches to effectively respond to the diverse learning styles, strengths and needs of our students and follow the standards set by the Victorian Institute of Teaching
- our school's Statement of Values are incorporated into our curriculum and promoted to students, staff and parents so that they are shared and celebrated as the foundation of our school community
- carefully planned transition programs to support students moving into different stages of their schooling
- positive behaviour and student achievements are 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 can contribute to and provide feedback on decisions about school operations through the Student Representative Council (SRC) and other forums including year group meetings and Peer Support Groups. Students are also encouraged to speak with their teachers, Year Level Coordinator, Assistant Principal and Principal whenever they have any questions or concerns.
- create opportunities for cross age connections amongst students through school sport, camps, extra-curricular programs and peer support programs
- All students are welcome to self-refer to the Student Wellbeing Coordinator, Year Level Coordinators, Assistant Principal and Principal if they would like to discuss an 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

- Safe Schools
- programs, incursions and excursions developed to address issue specific behaviour (i.e. anger management programs)
- opportunities for student inclusion (i.e. sports teams, clubs, recess and lunchtime activities)
- buddy programs, peers support programs

Targeted

- each year level has a Year Level Coordinator responsible for their year, who monitor the health and wellbeing of students in their year, and act as a point of contact for students who may need additional support
- all students from Year 9 and above will be assisted to develop a Career Action Plan, with targeted goals and support to plan for their future
- 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 and a Student Support Group (SSG) and will be referred to Student Support Services for an Educational Needs Assessment
- Murtoa College assists students to plan their Year 10 and 11 work experience, supported by their Career Action Plan
- wellbeing staff will undertake health promotion and social skills development in response to needs identified by student wellbeing data, classroom teachers or other school staff each year
- staff will apply a trauma-informed approach (BSEM) to working with students who have experienced trauma

Individual

Murtoa College implements a range of strategies that support and promote individual engagement. These can include:

- building constructive relationships with students at risk or students who are vulnerable due to complex individual circumstances
- meeting with student and their parent/carer to talk about how best to help the student engage with school
- developing an Individual Education Plan and/or a Behaviour Support Plan
- considering if any environmental changes need to be made, for example changing the classroom set up
- referring the student to:
 - school-based wellbeing supports
 - Student Support Services
 - Appropriate external supports such as council based youth and family services, other allied health professionals, headspace, child and adolescent mental health services or Child First
 - Re-engagement programs such as Navigator

Where necessary the school will support the student's family to engage by:

- being responsive and sensitive to changes in the student's circumstances and health and wellbeing
- collaborating, where appropriate and with the support of the student and their family, with any external allied health professionals, services or agencies that are supporting the student
- monitoring individual student attendance and developing an Attendance Improvement Plans in collaboration with the student and their family
- running regular Student Support Group meetings for all students:
 - with a disability
 - in Out of Home Care
 - and with other complex needs that require ongoing support and monitoring.

4. Identifying students in need of support

Murtoa College is committed to providing the necessary support to ensure our students are supported intellectually, emotionally and socially. The Student Wellbeing team plays a significant role in developing and implementing strategies help identify students in need of support and enhance student wellbeing. Murtoa College will utilise the following information and tools to identify students in need of extra emotional, social or educational support:

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

5. Student rights and responsibilities

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

Students have the right to:

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

Students have the responsibility to:

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

Students who may have a complaint or concern about something that has happened at school are encouraged to speak to their parents or carers and approach a trusted teacher or a member of the school leadership team.

6. Student behavioural expectations

Behavioural expectations of students, staff and families are grounded in our school's Statement of Values. Student bullying behaviour will be responded to consistently with Murtoa College's Bullying policy.

When a student acts in breach of the behaviour standards of our school community, Murtoa College 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 implement 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
- referral to the Year Level Coordinator
- restorative practices
- detentions
- behaviour support and intervention meetings
- suspension
- expulsion

Suspension, expulsion and restrictive interventions are measures of last resort and may only be used in situations consistent with Department policy, available at:

- <https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/suspensions/policy>
- <https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/expulsions/policy>
- <https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/restraint-seclusion/policy>

In line with Ministerial Order 1125, no student aged 8 or younger will be expelled without the approval of the Secretary of the Department of Education and Training.

The Principal of Murtoa College is responsible for ensuring all suspensions and expulsions are recorded on CASES21.

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

7. Engaging with families

Murtoa College 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 processes and procedures (e.g. XUNO).
- 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

Murtoa College will collect data each year to understand the frequency and types of wellbeing issues that are experienced by our students so that we can measure the success or otherwise of our school-based strategies and identify emerging trends or needs.

Sources of data that will be assessed on an annual basis include:

- student survey data
- incidents data
- school reports

- parent survey
- case management
- CASES21, including attendance and absence data
- SOCS

Murtoa College 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
- Included in student diaries so that it is easily accessible to parents, carers and students
- 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

Murtoa College related policies including *Statement of Values and School Philosophy, Bullying Prevention and Child Safe Standards*.

<https://www.murtoasc.vic.edu.au/policies/>

POLICY REVIEW AND APPROVAL

Policy last reviewed	November 2021
Approved by	Principal
Next scheduled review date	November 2023