

STUDENT WELLBEING AND ENGAGEMENT POLICY

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.

Monash Children's Hospital School (MCHS) 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.

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



1. School profile

Monash Children's Hospital School (MCHS) is a Department of Education and Training school located within Monash Children's Hospital. The school has been established to provide education for children who are inpatients and/or outpatients of Monash Children's Hospital inclusive of Early in Life Mental Health Services (ELMHS). Monash Children's Hospital School delivers education services alongside a patient's treatment, recovery and reintegration. It supports patients with significant health conditions who are at-risk of disengaging from education, or who are unable to attend their regular educational setting due to their health condition. The intent of the school is to provide educational experiences and outcomes that children and young people would have had, had they not been experiencing a significant health condition.

MCHS teachers work closely with the young person, their families, their treating team and their regular educational setting. Our staff members work closely with Monash Children's Hospital medical/health professionals as part of a multidisciplinary approach and provide education for students aged 5-18 years of age. We aim to build a safe and supportive environment and culture, one that promotes positive relationships, values diversity and supports the holistic development of our students.

Advocacy

While the young person is an inpatient/outpatient of Monash Children's Hospital (inclusive of ELMHS) the teachers also act as educational advocates for the young person and their family.

- Treatment Phase: Establish and maintain contact with the young person's regular educational setting in a supportive and confidential manner in order to provide continuity with their learning.
- Recovery Phase: Ongoing conversations and liaising between home, hospital and school for the period of time the young person is recovering at home.
- Reintegration Phase: Provide support to the young person and the family to assist in a smooth and positive reintegration to school/TAFE.

The school is a part of a multidisciplinary team and has access to Monash Children's Hospital medical and health personnel: doctors, nurses, allied health, interpreters, indigenous liaison officers, social workers etc.

The student population is extremely fluid and changes on a daily basis, depending on the number of young people who are inpatient/outpatients of Monash Children's Hospital inclusive of Early in Life Mental Health Services. The time frame that students are supported by MCHS is varied and can range from a couple of days to a number of months or years.



2. School values, philosophy and vision

VISION

Monash Children's Hospital School's vision is to ensure young people will have access to high quality teaching and learning that will ensure continuity of their education regardless of their health condition.

MISSION

Monash Children's Hospital School's mission is to provide education for children who are inpatients and/or outpatients of Monash Children's Hospital inclusive of Early in Life Mental Health Services (ELMHS).

OBJECTIVE

Monash Children's Hospital School's objective is to provide continuity of a young person's education and assist them to stay connected to their base school/education provider.

VALUES

Monash Children's Hospital School's values are Collaboration, Inclusion and Excellence.



Engagement strategies

MCHS 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, targeted 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
- analysing and being responsive to a range of school data such as attendance, student and parent survey data and student management data
- deliver a broad curriculum that is tailored to student's interests, strengths and aspirations
- 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
- the school's Statement of Values are incorporated into the curriculum and promoted to students, staff and parents/carers so that they are shared and celebrated as the foundation of our school community
- welcoming all parents/carers and being responsive to them as partners in learning
- carefully planned transition programs to support students moving into different stages of their schooling
- positive behaviour and student achievement is acknowledged
- 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 Peer Support Groups. Students are also encouraged to speak with their teachers and treating team members whenever they have any questions or concerns



*Bringing Education
and Health Together*

- create opportunities for cross—age connections amongst students through peer support programs
- engage in school wide positive behaviour support with our staff and students, which includes programs such as:
 - Resilience, Rights and Respectful Relationships
- opportunities for student inclusion

Targeted

- each unit and ward team have a MCHS leader who oversees and monitors the health and wellbeing of students on the respective ward/unit and act as a point of contact for students who may need additional support
- staff will apply a trauma-informed approach to working with students who have experienced trauma

Individual

MCHS 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
- assisting in the development of Individual Learning Plans and/or Behaviour Support Plans
- considering if any environmental changes need to be made, for example changing the classroom/learning space set up
- referring the student to:
 - hospital and or school-based wellbeing supports
 - appropriate external supports such as council based youth and family services, other allied health professionals, Headspace, child and adolescent mental health services or ChildFirst. This will be carried out by the MCH/ELMHS treating team members
 - re-engagement programs such as Navigator

Where necessary the MCHS 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. This could be carried out by the MCH/MCHS/ELMHS treating team members.
- Being involved in Student Support Group meetings, if requested, for students:
 - with a disability
 - who have a chronic health condition
 - in Out of Home Care and
 - with other complex needs that require ongoing support and monitoring.

3. Identifying students in need of support

MCHS is committed to providing the necessary support to ensure our students are supported intellectually, emotionally and socially. The MCHS team plays a significant role in developing and implementing strategies that help identify students in need of support and enhance student wellbeing. MCHS 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 admission into MCH, ELMHS and MCHS
- attendance records – from their base school
- academic performance – from their base school
- observations by school staff such as changes in engagement, behaviour, self-care, social connectedness and motivation
- attendance, detention and suspension data – from their base school
- engagement with families
- self-referrals or referrals from medical/health colleagues



4. 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 (MCHS/MCH/ELMHS), parents and carers treat each other with respect and dignity. Our school's Statement of Commitment to Child Safety 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 MCHS are encouraged to speak to their parents or carers and approach a trusted teacher/a member of the school leadership team or member of their MCH/MCHS/ELMHS treating team.

Student behavioural expectations and management

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

When a student acts in breach of the behaviour standards of our school community, MCHS will institute a staged response, consistent with the Department's Student Engagement and Inclusion Guidelines and Behaviour policy. Where appropriate, parents/carers will be informed about the inappropriate behaviour.

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. All of the above issues would be discussed with MCH/ELMHS treating team Leadership members before any action is taken.

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 Ward/Unit MCHS Leader
- restorative practices

Suspension, expulsion (not occurring at MCHS) 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 MCHS is responsible for ensuring all suspensions and expulsions are recorded on Compass.

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

5. Engaging with families

MCHS values the input of parents and carers, and we will strive to support families to engage in their child's learning. We aim to be partners in learning with parents, carers and/or kin in our



school community.

We work hard to create successful partnerships with parents and carers by:

- ensuring that all parents/carers have access to our school policies and procedures, available on our school website
- maintaining an open, respectful line of communication between parents/carers and staff
- 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.

6. Evaluation

MCHS 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
- parent survey data
- case management data
- information from EMR and SMR

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 (not at MCHS) outlined in the Department's policies at:



- [Suspension process](#)
- [Expulsions - Decision](#)

FURTHER INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

Please refer to

- MCHS Child Safety Standards Policy
- MCHS Bullying Prevention Policy
- Statement of Values and School Philosophy

POLICY REVIEW AND APPROVAL

Policy will be reviewed by March 2024	School Council
Next scheduled review date	March 2024

