Merrimac
State High School
Gold Coast, Australia

Pride in Excellence

STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT

RESPECT RESPONSIBILITY RELIABILITY

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CONTACT INFORMATION

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Contact Person:	Mel Woolnough (Principal)

ENDORSEMENT

Principal Name:	Mel Woolnough
Principal Signature:	
Date:	3 December 2025

Parent Forum Chair:	Nicole Moore
Parent Forum Chair Signature:	
Date:	3 December 2025

PURPOSE

Merrimac State High School's community strives to build positive relationships, value differences, encourage life long-learning and contribute to the school, family and wider community.

We believe that education is a shared responsibility. We promote a spirit of co-operation and belonging amongst students, staff, carers and the community. We aim to prepare our students for life as literate, informed, skilled, happy, responsible and caring individuals who are encouraged through their endeavours to take 'Pride in Excellence'.

We are committed to motivate students to continue learning, to contribute positively to their families and communities and to gain fulfilment in their lives by embracing all the challenges that life presents.

At Merrimac State High School we value Respect, Responsibility and Reliability.

There is a strong belief that everyone has the right to be respected and the responsibility to respect themselves, others and property. It is expected that all members of the Merrimac community are reliable in their commitment to ensuring that their actions have only a positive influence on all.

To ensure students and staff can achieve their best within a safe and caring environment; school values have been developed and are exemplified by all members of our school community. The 3Rs of Respect, Responsibility and Reliability are embedded in our whole school approach to behaviour management.

The school is committed to providing a safe, respectful and disciplined learning environment for all students, staff, parents and visitors.

The Merrimac State High School Student Code of Conduct sets out the responsibilities and processes we use in our school to promote a productive, effective whole school approach to discipline.

Its purpose is to facilitate high standards of behaviour from all in the school community, ensuring learning and teaching in our school is prioritised, where all students are able to experience success and staff enjoy a safe workplace.

Whole School Approach To Discipline

Merrimac State High School uses Positive Behaviour for Learning (PBL) as the multi-tiered system of support for discipline in the school. This is a whole-school approach, used in all classrooms and programs offered through the school, including sporting activities and excursions.

PBL is an evidence-based framework used to:

- analyse and improve student behaviour and learning outcomes
- ensure that only evidence-based practices are used correctly by teachers to support students
- continually support staff members to maintain consistent school and classroom improvement practices.

PBL is underpinned by best practice which involves planning and implementing explicitly taught behaviours consistently across the whole school to promote positive behaviour and maintain teaching and learning environments that support learning and wellbeing for all students. This is a proactive and prevention-based approach as expected behaviours are explicitly taught with the prospect of preventing the development of new behaviour problems and reducing the frequency and intensity of existing inappropriate behaviours.

At Merrimac State High School, we believe discipline is about more than punishment. It is a word that reflects our belief that student behaviour is a part of the overall teaching and learning approach in our school and an individual's growth and development. Our staff take responsibility for making their expectations clear, for providing supportive instruction about how to meet these expectations and strive to use behavioural incidents as opportunities to re-teach.

The development of the Merrimac State High School's Student Code of Conduct is an opportunity to explain the PBL framework with parents and students, and gain their support to implement a consistent approach to teaching behaviour. The language and expectations of PBL can be used in any environment, including the home setting for students. Doing everything we can do to set students up for success is a shared goal of every parent and school staff member.

Any students or parents who have questions or would like to discuss the Student Code of Conduct or PBL are encouraged to speak with the class teacher or make an appointment to meet with the Head of Department of Student Support and Engagement.

PBL Expectations

Our staff are committed to delivering a high quality of education for every student, and believe all adults in the school, whether visiting or working, should meet the same three Positive Behaviour for Learning (PBL) expectations in place for students, being Respectful, Responsible and Reliable.

The following examples illustrate how the Positive Behaviour for Learning (PBL) expectations are demonstrated by students across the school.

Student Schoolwide Expectations

PBL BEHAVIOUR MATRIX

Merrimac State High School

	RESPECT	RESPONSIBILITY	RELIABILITY
ALL ENVIRONMENTS	I follow staff instructions the first time without debate I am openminded and treat everyone with kindness during conversations and interactions I value diverse perspectives and contribute to a positive, inclusive school environment where everyone feels safe and valued I make conscious choices and take accountability for my behaviours and the manner in which I conduct myself I show patience and kindness by being considerate and supportive toward others in all situations I demonstrate respect by using school-appropriate language I respect others privacy by refraining from filming students and teachers without permission	I take responsibility for my wellbeing by making positive choices that support my physical and mental health and reach out for support if I need it I respect others' personal space by being mindful of boundaries I wear the school uniform with pride as per the uniform policy I am an upstander, not a bystander by actively supporting others I take responsibility for caring for my own belongings, as well as the property of the school and my peers I keep my phone and electronic devices away for the day unless otherwise instructed by a staff member	I use facilities appropriately and for their intended purpose only I immediately report any damage to staff I use ICT appropriately, respectfully & lawfully and for school purposes only I take initiative when issues arise, managing conflict constructively and seeking solutions to resolve problems effectively
CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT	I respect the learning space and the people within it to create a safe and cooperative environment I am a curious and active learner who engages in all learning tasks I consistently follow class routines, helping to maintain an organised and focused learning environment I allow others' their right to learn and teachers the right to teach	I adhere to the academic integrity policy I arrive to class organised for learning by bringing school required equipment I attend every lesson punctually, ensuring I am present and prepared to engage in the learning process I submit assessment and learning tasks on time I complete all set tasks as instructed by my teacher to the best of my ability, and encourage others to do so I actively participate and contribute within the learning environment I take ownership of my learning and actions I honestly think about my strengths and challenges and take steps to achieve my goals I ask questions to clarify and extend my learning I use strategies to help me manage my behaviour and emotions and reach my personal and learning goals	I demonstrate reliability by keeping the learning environment clean and organised I seek permission before using equipment, ensuring that it is used responsibly and appropriately I put in consistent effort across all subjects and assignments, even when the work gets challenging I contribute my fair share to group projects, and my peers can count on me to follow through on my responsibilities I manage my time effectively by staying organised, prioritising tasks, and meeting deadlines I take accountability for my behaviour and the work I complete I take responsibility for knowing when assessments and learning tasks are due I regularly assess my own performance and progress in the class, identifying areas where I need to improve and taking action to do so
OUTSIDE ENVIRONMENTS	I transition promptly and quietly between classes, before school, after school and at lunch time I walk my personal transportation devices (scooters, bikes) in and out of school I show respect on social media by being mindful of my words, treating others with kindness, and promoting a positive online environment	I travel safely to and from school by following traffic rules and laws and being mindful of our surroundings I behave appropriately while wearing my uniform outside of school grounds, knowing that I am still representing the school	I follow a set routine and schedule for completing homework tasks, assignments and revision I remain in school grounds during school hours and follow procedures through The Hub if I need to leave early or arrive late I maintain a clean and tidy area during lunch breaks and dispose of any rubbish in the bin

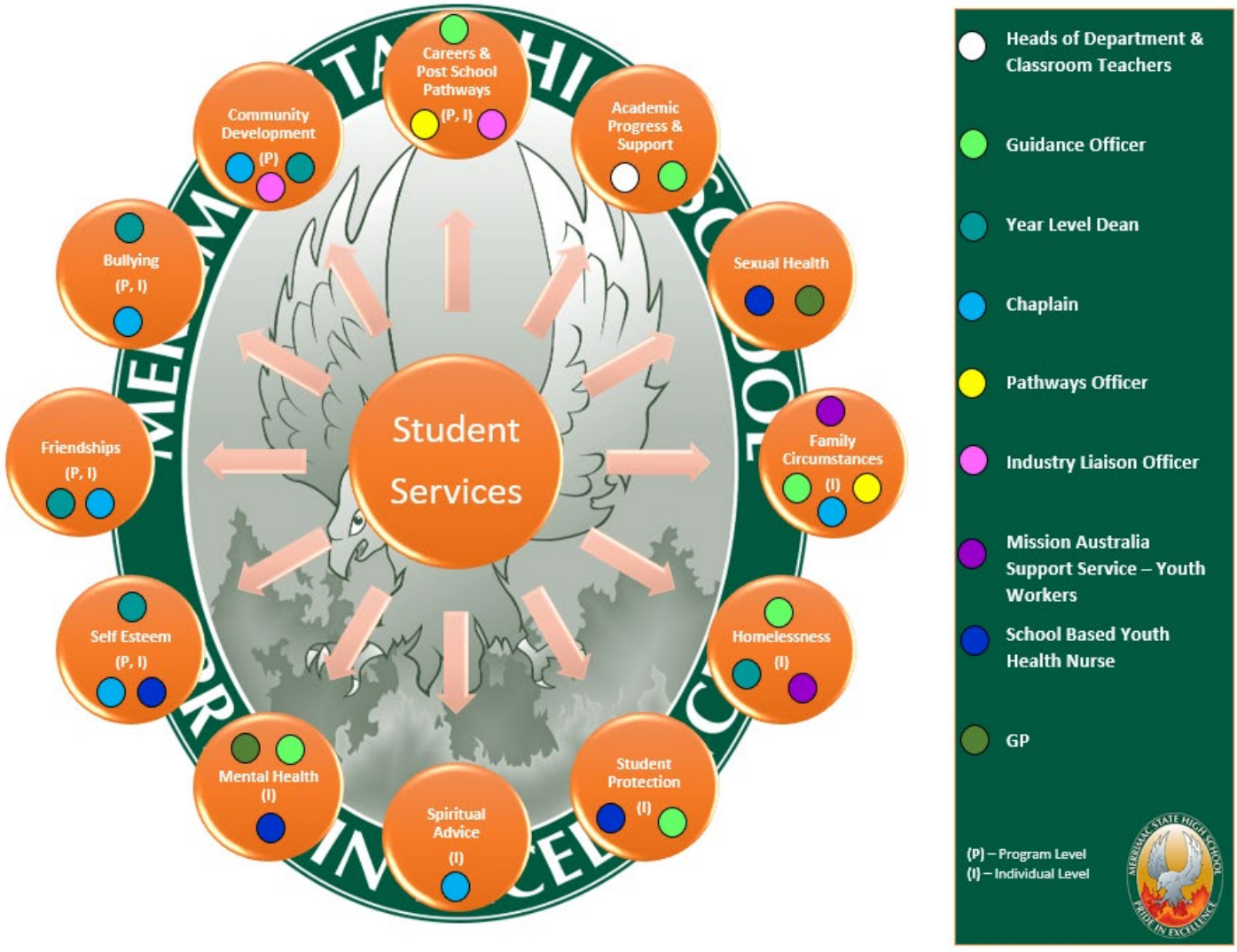
STUDENT WELLBEING AND SUPPORT NETWORK

Learning and wellbeing are inextricably linked — students learn best when their wellbeing is optimised, and they develop a strong sense of wellbeing when they experience success in learning. The student learning and wellbeing framework supports State schools with creating positive school cultures and embedding student wellbeing in all aspects of school life through connecting the learning environment, curriculum and pedagogy, policies, procedures and partnerships for learning and life.

Merrimac State High School is proud to have a comprehensive Student Support Team in place to help the social, emotional and physical wellbeing of every student. In addition to the assistance provided by class teachers, we have a team of professionals whose dedicated roles are to help ensure our school is an inclusive, nurturing environment.

Students can approach any trusted school staff member at Merrimac State High School to seek assistance or advice. If they are unable to assist they will provide guidance and help ensure the student is connected to the appropriate representative of the Student Support Network.

Parents who would like more information about the student support roles and responsibilities are invited to contact the Head of Department Student Support and Engagement or a Guidance Officer on the school phone number.



Learning And Behaviour Statement

The school has the expectation that all members of our community respect themselves, others and the environment. The school promotes and values quality relationships to ensure all students, parents and teachers take responsibility for their part in providing high standards of education. All parties are held accountable for the quality of these relationships.

Students are expected to attend every school day on time, ready to learn, in uniform and with the necessary equipment for the day's work. These attributes strengthen commitment to the school's values of Respect, Responsibility and Reliability.

In order to support students through the education process, the Positive Behaviour for Learning (PBL) program has been adopted. This framework allows us to monitor, review and improve behaviour in all students. Our major focus is in identifying, promoting and rewarding positive behaviours. Additional support and timely interventions are implemented when a student exhibits unacceptable or potentially dangerous behaviour.

Consideration of Individual Circumstances

Staff at Merrimac State High School consider students' individual circumstances, such as their behaviour history, disability, mental health and wellbeing, religious and cultural considerations, home environment and care arrangements when teaching expectations, responding to inappropriate behaviour or applying a disciplinary consequence.

In considering the individual circumstances of each student, we recognise that the way we teach, the support we provide and the way we respond to students will differ. This reflects the principle of equality, where every student is given the support they need to be successful. This also means that not everyone will be treated the same, because treating everyone the same is not equitable. For example, some students need additional support to interpret or understand an expectation. Others may benefit from more opportunities to practise a required skill or behaviour. For a small number of students, the use of certain disciplinary consequences may be considered inappropriate or ineffective due to complex trauma or family circumstances. These are all matters that our teachers and principal consider with each individual student in both the instruction of behaviour and the response to behaviour.

Our teachers are also obliged by law to respect and protect the privacy of individual students, so while we understand the interest of other students, staff and parents to know what corrections another student might have received, we will not disclose or discuss this information with anyone but the student's family. This applies even if the behavioural incident, such as bullying, involves your child. You can be assured that school staff take all matters, such as bullying, very seriously and will address them appropriately. We expect that parents and students will respect the privacy of other students and families.

If you have concerns about the behaviour of another student at the school, or the way our staff have responded to their behaviour, please contact your child's Year Level Dean of Students to assist.

DIFFERENTIATED SUPPORTS TO REDIRECT TO POSITIVE BEHAVIOUR

All students receive support for their academic and behavioural development. Focus is on the whole school implementation of both the Australian Curriculum and Positive Behaviour for Learning (PBL) expectations. This involves:

- explicitly teaching expected behaviours
- being consistent when addressing challenging behaviour, while taking developmental norms and behavioural function into account
- providing refresher lessons and targeted recognition throughout the school year so skills are ready and likely to be used when students need them.

RE-DIRECTING LOW-LEVEL AND INFREQUENT PROBLEM BEHAVIOUR

Students come to school to learn. PBL processes support a consistent and transparent approach to management of unacceptable behaviours. The Essential Skills for Classroom Management inform staff of best practice for managing low level unacceptable behaviours across the school. Students are encouraged to reflect on their own behaviour, evaluate it against expected school behaviour, and plan how their behaviour could be modified so as to align with the expectations and values of our school community.

Class teacher provides in-class corrective feedback, sanctions and rule reminders to respond to low-level or minor problem behaviours.
These may include:

- Pre-correction (e.g. “Remember, walk quietly to your seat”)
- Non-verbal and visual cues (e.g. posters, hand gestures)
- Whole class practising of routines
- Ratio of 5 positive to 1 negative commentary or feedback to class
- Corrective feedback (e.g. “Hand up when you want to ask a question”)
- Rule reminders (e.g. “When the bell goes, stay seated until I dismiss you”)
- Explicit behavioural instructions (e.g. “Pick up your pencil”)
- Proximity control
- Tactical ignoring of inappropriate behaviour (not student)
- Revised seating plan and relocation of student/s
- Individual positive reinforcement for appropriate behaviour
- Class-wide incentives
- Reminders of incentives or class goals
- Redirection
- Low voice and tone for individual instructions
- Give 30 second ‘take-up’ time for student/s to process instruction/s
- Reduce verbal language
- Break down tasks into smaller chunks
- Provide positive choice of task order (e.g. “Which one do you want to start with?”)
- Prompt student to take a break or time away in class
- Model appropriate language, problem solving and verbalise thinking process (e.g. “I’m not sure what is the next step, who can help me?”)
- Provide demonstration of expected behaviour
- Peer consequence (e.g. corrective feedback to influential peer demonstrating same problem behaviour)
- Private discussion with student about expected behaviour
- Reprimand for inappropriate behaviour
- Warning of more serious consequences (e.g. removal from classroom)
- Detention

FOCUSED

Approximately 15% of all students in any school or classroom may require additional support to meet behaviour expectations, even after being provided with differentiated and explicit teaching. These students may have difficulty meeting behavioural expectations in a particular period of the day or as part of a learning area/subject, and focused teaching is provided to help them achieve success.

Focused teaching involves revisiting key behavioural concepts and/or skills and using explicit and structured teaching strategies in particular aspects of a behaviour skill. Focused teaching provides students with more opportunities to practise skills and multiple opportunities to achieve the intended learning and expected behaviour.

At Merrimac State High School we offer a range of strategies and programs that target specific individual needs of particular students and are designed to provide lifelong skills designed to facilitate acceptable behaviours. The Student Support Services and PBL Teams operate across the school to support students where repeated unacceptable behaviour is a result of other factors that may well be impacting on their behaviour, attendance or mental health and wellbeing.

Class teacher is supported by other school-based staff to address in-class problem behaviour. This may include:

- Functional Behaviour Assessment
- Individual student behaviour support strategies (e.g. Student behaviour plan)
- Targeted skills teaching in small group
- Re-engagement Program
- Detention
- Behavioural contract
- Counselling and guidance support
- Self-monitoring plan
- Teacher coaching and debriefing
- Referral to Student Support Network for team-based problem solving
- Stakeholder meeting with parents and external agencies

INTENSIVE

For a small number of students, approximately 2-5%, a high level of differentiated support or intensive teaching is required to enable them to meet the behavioural expectations. Intensive teaching involves frequent and explicit instruction, with individuals or in small groups, to develop mastery of basic behavioural concepts, skills and knowledge.

Some students may require intensive teaching for a short period, for particular behaviour skills. Other students may require intensive teaching for a more prolonged period. Decisions about the approach will be made based on data collected from their teacher or teachers, and following consultation with the student's family.

For a small number of students who continue to display behaviours that are deemed complex and challenging, then individualised, function-based behaviour assessment and support plans and multi-agency collaboration may be provided to support the student.

This approach will seek to address the acute impact of barriers to learning and participation faced by students who are negotiating a number of complex personal issues. School leadership team work in consultation with Student Support Network to address persistent or ongoing serious problem behaviour.

This may include:

- Functional Behaviour Assessment based individual support plan
- Complex case management and review
- Stakeholder meeting with parents and external agencies including regional specialists
- Temporary removal of student property (e.g. mobile phone)
- Short term suspension (up to 10 school days)
- Long term suspension (up to 20 school days)
- Charge related suspension (student has been charged with a serious criminal offence is suspended from school until the charge has been dealt with by the relevant justice authorities)
- Suspension pending exclusion (student is suspended from school pending a decision by the Director General or delegate (principal) about their exclusion from school)
- Exclusion (student is excluded from a particular state school site, a group of state schools or all state schools in Queensland for a defined period of time or permanently)
- Cancellation of enrolment for students older than compulsory school age who refuse to participate in the educational program provided at the school.

DETERMINATION OF CONSEQUENCES

Staff consider a student's individual circumstances, such as behaviour history, disability, mental health and wellbeing, religious and cultural considerations, home environment and care arrangements when responding to inappropriate behaviour and applying any disciplinary absence. Whilst consideration of circumstances is always taken into account, serious offenses may still warrant suspension.

Differentiated, Focused and Intensive Consequences, as listed previously, provide a broad guide on the range of responses that may be used to respond to problem behaviour, suspensions or exclusions may be necessary to address serious incidents, for example when student behaviour is of such intensity (e.g. severity) and / or frequency (e.g. repeated behaviour). The following table provides a guide on the possible consequences that different problem behaviour may attract depending on the circumstances.

Educating young people is a shared responsibility and Merrimac State High School recognises the role of parents/carers as integral to a coordinated case managed approach to encourage students to reach identified behaviour patterns. If for any reason the student chooses to engage in inappropriate behaviour including but not limited to the following, the maximum consequence of a permanent exclusion from Merrimac State High School may apply. Maximum consequence means the most severe disciplinary outcome that may result from an identified misbehaviour. The term does not mean that the most severe disciplinary outcome will result in all cases. The outcome will be at the discretion of the Principal.

- Behaviour that poses an unacceptable risk to the safety or wellbeing of other students, staff or other members of the school community (including but not limited to bullying, fighting, violence, threats, harassment, sexual harassment, intimidation or facilitation thereof by others, encouraging persons to trespass onto school premises or to interfere with school activities, use of internet, carriage service or electronic media/devices to menace, harass, cause offence, embarrass, abuse or disseminate pornographic or inappropriate material).

- Defiant or disrespectful behaviour towards staff, students or the school community (including but not limited to refusal to follow directions, aggressive behaviour including yelling and swearing and displaying, distributing, promoting or publishing a prohibited symbol in a way that may cause them to feel menaced, harassed or offended).

- Behaviour that interferes with the property of the school or others within the school community (including but not limited to vandalism, graffiti, wilful damage, theft etc.).

- Possession of certain inappropriate objects or weapons (including but not limited to knives of any type, sharp objects, knuckle dusters, sling shots, firearms or replicas thereof, fire crackers [explosives] etc.).

- Inappropriate use, possession, supply of intoxicating substances and/or utensils (including but not limited to illegal drugs or illegal drug implements, alcohol, vape pens, electronic cigarettes, paint, glue, prescription medicine etc.).

- Habitual or persistent misconduct/disobedience or other conduct prejudicial to the good order and management of the school (includes repeated breaches of the school's Student Code of Conduct and related policies and procedures).

- Serious behaviour or action in a private capacity that is prejudicial to the good order and management of the school (including but not limited to the illegal or unsafe use of a personal mobility device).

- An offense serious or otherwise for which the student has been charged.

Serious matters may also be referred to the Police for further investigation.

Please see Appendix 1: Management of Major Disciplinary Matters Chart for further details.

School Disciplinary Absences

A School Disciplinary Absence (SDA) is an enforced period of absence from attending a Queensland state school, applied by the Principal as a consequence to address poor student behaviour. There are four types of SDA:

- Short suspension (1 to 10 school days)
- Long suspension (11 to 20 school days)
- Charge-related suspension
- Exclusion (period of not more than one year or permanently).

At Merrimac State High School, the use of any SDA is considered a very serious decision. It is typically only used by the Principal when other options have been exhausted or the student's behaviour is so serious that continued attendance at the school is considered a risk to the safety or wellbeing of the school community.

Parents and students may appeal a long suspension, charge-related suspension or exclusion decision. A review will be conducted by the Director-General or their delegate, and a decision made within 40 school days to confirm, amend/vary or set aside the original SDA decision by the Principal.

The appeal process is a thorough review of all documentation associated with the SDA decision and provides an opportunity for both the school and the family to present their case in the matter. Time is afforded for collection, dissemination and response to the materials by both the school and the family. It is important that the purpose of the appeal is understood so that expectations are clear, and appropriate supports are in place to ensure students can continue to access their education while completing their SDA.

Re-entry following suspension

Students who are suspended from Merrimac State High School must attend a re-entry meeting on the day of their scheduled return to school or prior if indicated on suspension paperwork. The main purpose of this meeting is to welcome the student, with their parent/s, back to the school. It is not a time to review the student's behaviour or the decision to suspend, the student has already received a punishment through their disciplinary absence from school. The aim of the re-entry meeting is for school staff to set the student up for future success and strengthen home-school communication.

To support the student's successful re-engagement in school following a suspension an Individual Behaviour Support Plan may be created and discussed in this meeting.

Reasonable adjustments

In planning the re-entry meeting, school staff will consider reasonable adjustments needed to support the attendance and engagement of the student. This includes selecting an appropriate and accessible meeting space, organising translation or interpretation services or supports (e.g. AUSLAN), provision of written and/or pictorial information and other relevant accommodations. The inclusion of support staff, such as Guidance Officers or Community Education Counsellors, may also offer important advice to ensure a successful outcome to the re-entry meeting.

School Policies

Within a school community there are specific health and wellbeing issues that will need to be addressed for the whole school, specific students, or in certain circumstances.

Drug education and intervention

Merrimac State High School implements drug intervention measures for students involved in drug-related incidents at school, during school activities or while in school uniform. This is managed to protect the health and safety of the student/s involved, other students, school staff and the wider community.

Specialised health needs

Merrimac State High School works closely with parents to ensure students with specialised health needs, including those requiring specialised health procedures, have access to a reasonable standard of support for their health needs whilst attending school or school-based activities.

This means that appropriate health plans are developed and followed for students with specialised health needs, that staff are aware of the student's medical condition and that an appropriate number of staff have been trained to support the student's health condition.

It is the responsibility of parents and independent students to ensure all medical information is up to date.

Mental health

Merrimac State High School implements early intervention measures and treatments for students where there is reasonable belief that a student has a mental health difficulty. This includes facilitating the development, implementation and periodic review of a Student Plan. The school also conducts lessons through the 'Merrimac Minds Matter' (Triple M) program. This program aims to develop protective factors amongst our students through the promotion, prevention and early intervention of mental health issues.

Merrimac State High School has tailored school discipline policies designed to ensure students, staff and visitors work cooperatively to create and maintain a supportive and safe learning environment. Please ensure that you familiarise yourself with the responsibilities for students, staff and visitors outlined in the following policies:

- Temporary removal of student property
- Use of mobile phones and other devices by students
- Preventing and responding to bullying
- Appropriate use of social media

TEMPORARY REMOVAL OF PROPERTY

The removal of any property in a student's possession may be necessary to promote the caring, safe and supportive learning environment of the school, and to maintain and foster mutual respect between all state school staff and students. The temporary removal of student property by school staff procedure outlines the processes, conditions and responsibilities for State School Principals and school staff when temporarily removing student property.

In determining what constitutes a reasonable time to retain student property, the Principal or state school staff will consider:

- the condition, nature or value of the property
- the circumstances in which the property was removed
- the safety of the student from whom the property was removed, other students or staff members
- good management, administration and control of the school.

The Principal or State school staff determine when the temporarily removed student property can be returned, unless the property has been handed to the Queensland Police Service (QPS) or awaiting collection by the QPS.

The following items are explicitly prohibited at Merrimac State High School and will be removed if found in a student's possession:

- illegal items or weapons (e.g. but not limited to guns, knives*, throwing stars, brass knuckles, chains, imitation guns or weapons)
- potentially dangerous items (e.g. blades, rope, laser pointers)
- drugs** (including tobacco, implements, vapes and vaping implements)
- alcohol
- aerosol deodorants or cans (including spray paint)
- explosives (e.g. fireworks, flares, sparklers)
- flammable solids or liquids (e.g. fire starters, mothballs, lighters, nangs)
- poisons (e.g. weed killer, insecticides)
- inappropriate or offensive material (e.g. racist literature, pornography, extremist propaganda).

* No knives of any type are allowed at school, including flick knives, ballistic knives, sheath knives, push daggers, trench knives, butterfly knives, star knives, butter knives, fruit knives or craft knives, or any item that can be used as a weapon, for example a chisel. Knives needed for school activities will be provided by the school, and the use of them will be supervised by school staff. In circumstances where students are required to have their own knives or sharp tools for particular subjects or vocational courses, the school will provide information about the procedures for carrying and storing these items at school.

** The administration of medications to students by school staff is only considered when a prescribing health practitioner has determined that it is necessary or when there is no other alternative in relation to the treatment of a specific health need. Schools require medical authorisation to administer any medication to students (**including over-the-counter medications such as paracetamol or alternative medicines**).

Responsibilities

STATE SCHOOL STAFF AT MERRIMAC STATE HIGH SCHOOL:

- do not require the student's consent to search school property such as lockers, desks or laptops that are supplied to the student through the school;
- may seize a student's bag where there is suspicion that the student has a dangerous item (for example, a knife) in their school bag, prior to seeking consent to search from a student or parent or calling the police;

- require consent from the student or parent/carer to examine or otherwise deal with the temporarily removed student property. For example, staff who temporarily remove a mobile phone from a student are not authorised to unlock the phone or to read, copy or delete messages stored on the phone.
- may search a student's property without the student's consent or the consent of the student's parent/carer in emergency circumstances when necessary (e.g. to access an EpiPen for an anaphylactic emergency);
- require consent from the student or parent/carer to search the person of a student (e.g. pockets or shoes). If consent is not provided and a search is considered necessary, the police or the student's parents should be called to make such a determination.

Parents and Caregivers of Students at Merrimac State High School:

- ensure your children do not bring property onto schools grounds or other settings used by the school (e.g. camp, sporting venues) that:
  - is prohibited according to the Merrimac State High School Student Code of Conduct
  - is illegal
  - puts the safety or wellbeing of others at risk
  - does not preserve a caring, safe, supportive or productive learning environment
  - does not maintain and foster mutual respect;
- collect temporarily removed student property as soon as possible after they have been notified by the Principal or state school staff that the property is available for collection.

Students of Merrimac State High School:

- do not bring property onto school grounds or other settings used by the school (e.g. camp, sporting venues) that:
  - is prohibited according to the Merrimac State High School Student Code of Conduct
  - is illegal
  - puts the safety or wellbeing of others at risk
  - does not preserve a caring, safe, supportive or productive learning environment
  - does not maintain and foster mutual respect;
- collect their property as soon as possible when advised by the Principal or state school staff it is available for collection.

E-Bike Safety

Merrimac State High School promotes safe, respectful and responsible behaviours when travelling to and from school.

Families are encouraged to familiarise themselves with current Queensland Government road rules and safety requirements for electric bicycles. Up-to-date information, including age requirements, device specifications and safe-riding expectations, is available at:

Link: E-Bike rules in Queensland
Link: Personal Mobility Devices in Queensland

The increasing use of e-bikes and other personal mobility devices requires clear expectations to ensure the safety of all students and the broader school community.

Expectations for Students

Students who ride e-bikes to and from school must:

- Follow all Queensland road rules and personal mobility device regulations.
- Wear an approved helmet at all times while riding.
- Ensure their bike or device meets legal requirements and is maintained in a safe working condition, including brakes, tyres, lights and battery.
- Ride in a manner that is safe, predictable and respectful to pedestrians and other road users.

- **On School Grounds**
- To maintain a safe environment:
- Riding e-bikes on school grounds is not permitted at any time.
- Students must dismount at the school boundary and walk their e-bike directly to the designated bike storage area.
- Charging e-bike batteries on school grounds is not permitted due to safety and fire-risk considerations.

- **Storage and Security**
- E-bikes must be stored in the designated bike enclosure.
- Students are responsible for bringing an appropriate lock to secure their e-bike.
- The school does not accept responsibility for theft, loss or damage of personal mobility devices brought onto the school site.

Use of ICT Facilities and Devices by Students

Queensland State Schools are committed to reducing the distraction of mobile phones and wearable devices to provide optimal learning environments for all students.

The aims of this policy are to:

- provide optimal learning and teaching environments, free from the distractions caused by personal use of mobile phones and wearable devices
- support schools to create safe and supportive learning environments that prioritise student engagement and wellbeing
- encourage increased face-to-face social interactions between students
- promote the health and wellbeing of students by providing opportunities for social interaction and physical activity during break times, and reduce the potential for students to be exposed to the negative impacts of the digital world, resulting from unsafe or inappropriate use of technology, such as cyberbullying, accessing harmful content or breaches of personal privacy.

Student use of mobile phones and wearable devices at school

- All State School students must keep their mobile phones switched off and ‘away for the day’ during school hours. Notifications on wearable devices, such as smartwatches, must be switched off so that phone calls, messages and other notifications cannot be sent or received during school hours.
- This policy also applies to student attendance at school activities, such as representative school sport, excursions and camps, unless otherwise determined by the school Principal.
- Students may only use their mobile phone or have wearable device notifications enabled during these times if they have an approved exemption for medical, disability and/or wellbeing reasons.
- Students participating in activities, such as off-site Vocational Education and Training or work placements must follow the expectations of the organisation in charge regarding the use of mobile devices.

In consultation with the broader school community, Merrimac State High School has determined that explicit teaching of responsible use of mobile phones and other devices is a critical component of digital literacy. The knowledge and confidence to navigate and use these technologies safely while developing digital literacy is a responsibility shared between parents, school staff and students.

It is also agreed that time and space should be provided at school where technology is not permitted, and students are encouraged to engage in other social learning and developmental activities. While students will not have access to a device during school time, they will be able to access their device under staff instruction in designated ‘green zones’ throughout the school. These green zones will be located in the Student Services Hub, Uniform Shop, Library, Canteen and at payment windows to enable students to make payments and access their digital ID cards to print.

Students, parents and visitors will see posters, such as the examples below; around the school that clearly identify our technology-free zones and our designated green zones. Please respect the community-agreed expectations for these spaces and behaviours.

EXEMPTIONS

Students that have individual circumstances that dictate they must have access to their phone or device are required to apply for an exemption to this policy by contacting the Head of Inclusion.
Students with an approved exemption must only use their mobile phone or wearable device for the intended, approved purpose.

RESPONSIBILITIES

The responsibilities for students using mobile phones or other devices at school or during school activities are outlined below.

It is acceptable for students at Merrimac State High School to use laptops or other similar devices (I-Pads and tablets) at school for:

- assigned class work and assignments set by teachers
- developing appropriate literacy, communication and information skills
- authoring text, artwork, audio and visual material for publication on the intranet or internet for educational purposes as supervised and approved by the school
- conducting general research for school activities and projects
- communicating or collaborating with other students, teachers, parents or experts in relation to school work
- accessing online references such as dictionaries, encyclopaedias, etc. ○ researching and learning through the department's eLearning environment
- making payments at clearly designated “green zones” within the school
- access mobile phones / digital devices as a learning tool in class time only when permitted by a teacher and when the “green zone poster” is displayed. Mobile phones and other devices must be switched off and out of site
- access mobile phones / digital devices to make payments and use a digital ID card at designated “green zones”
- be courteous, considerate and respectful of others when using a mobile device outside of school hours
- seek teacher's approval where they wish to use a mobile device under special circumstances
- seek teacher’s approval to access Compass or other timetabling apps associated and approved by the school.

It is unacceptable for students at Merrimac State High School to:

- use a mobile phone or other devices in an unlawful manner
- use a mobile phone, ear download, distribute or publish offensive messages or pictures
- phones or smart watches during school hours unless directed to do so by a teacher during either class or break time, or there has been prior approval given by the school in line with management of a chronic medical condition or a documented personalised learning plan
- download, distribute or publish offensive messages or pictures

- use obscene, inflammatory, racist, discriminatory or derogatory language
- use language and/or threats of violence that may amount to bullying and/or harassment, or even stalking
- insult, harass or attack others or use obscene or abusive language
- deliberately waste printing and internet resources
- damage computers, printers or network equipment
- commit plagiarism or violate copyright laws
- ignore teacher directions for the use of social media, online email and internet chat
- send chain letters or spam email (junk mail)
- knowingly download viruses or any other programs capable of breaching the department's network security
- use in-phone cameras anywhere a normal camera would be considered inappropriate, such as in change rooms, classrooms or toilets
- invade someone's privacy by recording personal conversations or daily activities and/or the further distribution (e.g. forwarding, texting, uploading, Bluetooth use etc.) of such material
- use a mobile phone (including those with Bluetooth functionality) to cheat during exams or assessments
- take into or use mobile devices at exams or during class assessment unless expressly permitted by school staff
- distribute or threaten distribution of an ‘intimate image’ as defined by the Criminal Code (Nonconsensual Sharing of Intimate Images) Amendment Act 2019
- participate in advertising the school, students, school logo, school uniform or school buildings on social media in any form
- use a mobile device to coordinate ‘meet ups’ during school time
- ‘Like’, share or create any form of social media that negatively identifies the school, students, uniform, school name, school logo, staff or facilities in any way.

At all times students, whether using ICT facilities and devices supplied by the school, or personal devices (including mobile phones and smart watches) will be required to act in accordance with the requirements of Merrimac State High School Student Code of Conduct. In addition, students and their parents should:

- understand the responsibility and behaviour requirements (as outlined by the school) that come with accessing the department’s ICT network facilities
- ensure they have the skills to report and discontinue access to harmful information if presented via the internet or email or social media platforms
- be aware that the use of programs/apps on a student’s personal laptop or similar device that allows the bypassing of filters placed on the internet by Department of Education contravenes the Student Code of Conduct
- be aware that access to ICT facilities and devices provides valuable learning experiences for students and supports the school's teaching and learning programs
- be aware that schools may remotely access departmentally-owned student computers or mobile devices for management purposes
- be aware that students who use a school's ICT facilities and devices in a manner that is not appropriate may be subject to disciplinary action by the school, which could include restricting network access and other measures
- understand that serious use of inappropriate online behaviour may constitute a criminal offence and become a police matter
- be aware that, despite internal departmental controls to manage content on the internet, illegal, dangerous or offensive information may be accessed or accidentally displayed
- be aware that teachers will always exercise their duty of care, by avoiding or reducing access to harmful information also requires responsible use by the student.

PROCEDURES

Mobile phones and other above-mentioned technologies used inappropriately at any time on a school day between 8:45am-3:00pm may be confiscated and stored in the Student Services safe zones for the remainder of the day. They may be retrieved from Student Services after 3.00 pm with the issued receipt (unless otherwise detailed where a parent/carer must collect the device.) Repeat offenders may lose the right to bring mobile phones to school as it is considered that they are deliberately failing to follow school rules and the Queensland Government Legislation in relation to mobile phones at school. Repeat offenders will be issued consequences (listed above) but are not limited to those consequences.

Students who are found using a banned device on school grounds, can expect the following:

1st Offence	1. Student is found using their phone between the times of 8:55am and 2:55pm and is requested to place their phone "away for the day." This could mean on their person (pocket) or in their bag. If the student refuses to follow the instruction or persists in using the phone after this initial instruction, they will be told to submit their phone to the Student Services building for storage for the day. 2. Student takes phone or device to Student Services building and hands over device and is given a receipt 3. The device will be locked in a secure locker for the day and returned at the end of the day with the receipt from the student 4. Text message sent to Carers/Guardians 5. Student provided with COMPASS electronic device slip to take back to class/teacher to show teacher they have handed device in to Student services building. Lunchtime detention given via Deans. 6. If the student refuses to submit their phone, the Dean or Deputy will be called to discuss and significant consequences may apply.
2nd Offence	1. Student is found to be in breach of the policy for the second time 2. Follow steps 2-5 as above 3. If the student refuses to submit their phone, the Dean or Deputy will be called to discuss and significant consequences may apply. 4. Parent/Guardian contacted and meeting is arranged with Dean and / or Deputy Principal and student where device will ONLY be returned to parent/guardian 5. A Discipline Improvement Plan (DIP) may be actioned where the student's mobile phone / device will be submitted each day to the Dean at Student Services. Other consequences (inclusive of participation in the re- engagement program "REP") may be actioned relevant to the School's Responsible Code of Behavior
3rd Offence (Plus)	1. Student is found in breach of the policy for the third time. 2. Follow steps 2-4 as above 3. Office informs Dean and DP of third offence 4. In consultation with the Principal consequences will be applied (inclusive of the original "DIP") and may include external suspension

PREVENTING AND RESPONDING TO BULLYING

Merrimac State High School uses the Positive Behaviour for Learning Framework to promote positive relationships and the wellbeing of all students, staff and visitors at the school.

Our staff know student learning is optimised when they feel connected to others and experience safe and trusting relationships. Students who feel secure are more likely to be active participants in their learning and to achieve better physical, emotional, social and educational outcomes. Teachers who feel valued and supported are more likely to engage positively with students and build stronger connections within the school community. Enhancing the wellbeing of students and their educators delivers overall long-term social, health and economic benefits to the Australian community.

The agreed national definition for Australian schools describes bullying as

- ongoing and deliberate misuse of power in relationships through repeated verbal, physical and/or social behaviour that intends to cause physical, social and/or psychological harm;
- involving an individual or a group misusing their power, or perceived power, over one or more persons who feel unable to stop it from happening;
- happening in person or online, via various digital platforms and devices and it can be obvious (overt) or hidden (covert). Bullying behaviour is repeated, or has the potential to be repeated, over time (for example, through sharing of digital records);
- having immediate, medium and long-term effects on those involved, including bystanders. Single incidents and conflict or fights between equals, whether in person or online, are not defined as bullying.

Behaviours that do not constitute bullying include:

- mutual arguments and disagreements (where there is no power imbalance)
- not liking someone or a single act of social rejection
- one-off acts of meanness or spite
- isolated incidents of aggression, intimidation or violence.

At Merrimac State High School, we are committed to ensuring the safety of our students. As such, we will address all forms of harmful behaviour, regardless of whether the behaviour falls within the above definition of bullying, to foster safer and more inclusive and respectful communities and to stop bullying and other harmful behaviours from the start. Our staff will work to quickly respond to any matters raised of this nature in collaboration with students and parents. We are committed to making reasonable efforts to initiate a response to any observed or reported bullying within the recommended timeframe recommended by the National Standard on reducing bullying in schools.

These actions may include:

- contacting parents/carers of student/s harmed and student/s engaging in harmful behaviour and communicating next steps
- initiating immediate safety action to prevent further harm
- providing initial wellbeing support to the student/s
- making reports to the police or other authorities where required
- taking initial appropriate and proportional response actions.

Minimising Bullying

Numerous activities are undertaken to develop strong friendly relationships between students. Some of these include:

- a transition program from primary to high school;
- self-esteem, relationship development and anti-bullying programs run in Merrimac Minds Matter classes (triple M);
- student mentor program;
- student council promoting positive bystander behaviour;
- cross age extra-curricular activities;
- Year Level Deans working with smaller cohorts of students;
- special support programs for improving low self-esteem and socialisation skills;
- undertaking annual survey of students regard their bullying concerns; and

When bullying occurs, what should be done?

By the students

- Initially use appropriate responses to solve the problem (e.g. walk away);
- Seek intervention by reporting bullying directly to a teacher, support staff or parent or via Stymie;
- Demonstrate positive bystander behaviour and tell a teacher, support staff or parent if they see another student being bullied; and
- Never ignore the situation.

By the parent

- Model appropriate behaviour at all times;
- Support the school's philosophy;
- Watch for signs of your child being bullied;
- Encourage your child to adopt the anti-bullying strategies taught at school;
- Instruct your child to immediately tell a teacher or support staff if they are bullied;
- Inform your student's Dean of Students immediately of any suspected bullying; and
- Support the Queensland Governments legislative provisions prohibiting social media use by children under the age of 16. For more information on this, please visit the e-safety website for resources for families and relevant legislation.

By teachers

- Model appropriate behaviour at all times;
- Reassure the individual that bullying is unacceptable. Listen to the student and ask what you can do to help;
- Use shared concern intervention tool as appropriate;
- Provide advice, intervene and monitor; and
- Record all reported incidents on OneSchool, and make a referral to the Dean of Students or Faculty HOD

Procedures

Stage 1

Initial reports of bullying resolved with assistance of classroom teacher and Dean. All details recorded on OneSchool.

Stage 2

Continued bullying referred to HOD Student Support & Engagement. If appropriate, initiate the process of Restorative Justice or Shared Concern and place student on an Individual Behaviour Support Plan (IBSP). Both sets of parents/caregivers to be informed and identify role they can play in assisting the resolution.

STAGE 3

When bullying continues after support and involvement of parents, the conditions of the IBSP have been ignored. This may lead to suspension or a recommendation to exclude the student.

KEY CONTACTS FOR STUDENTS AND PARENTS TO REPORT BULLYING:

Your child's Year level Dean of Students or HOD Student Support & Engagement

STYMIE

Stymie allows Merrimac State High School to receive anonymous email notifications from students. Students can make notifications to Merrimac State High School staff about people who they believe are being bullied. This notification can be about physical, cyber, relational, or emotional bullying. Information received includes; where the alleged bullying happens, when it happens, how many people are involved and how often it happens. These notifications are then investigated by staff and appropriate interventions are put in place to support students.

If students are reporting incidents on Stymie, it is important that they provide factual and detailed information about their concern(s) so that the incident/s can be investigated efficiently.

CYBERBULLYING

Cyberbullying is treated at Merrimac State High School High School with the same level of seriousness as in-person bullying. The major difference with cyberbullying however, is that unlike in-person bulling, cyberbullying follows students into their community, their homes and their bedrooms, giving them no opportunity to escape the harassment or abuse during the evening, weekends or holidays.

In the first instance, students or parents who wish to make a report about cyberbullying should approach their class teacher or Year Level Dean. The Head of Student Support & Engagement can also be approached directly by students, parents or staff for assistance in preventing and responding to cyberbullying.

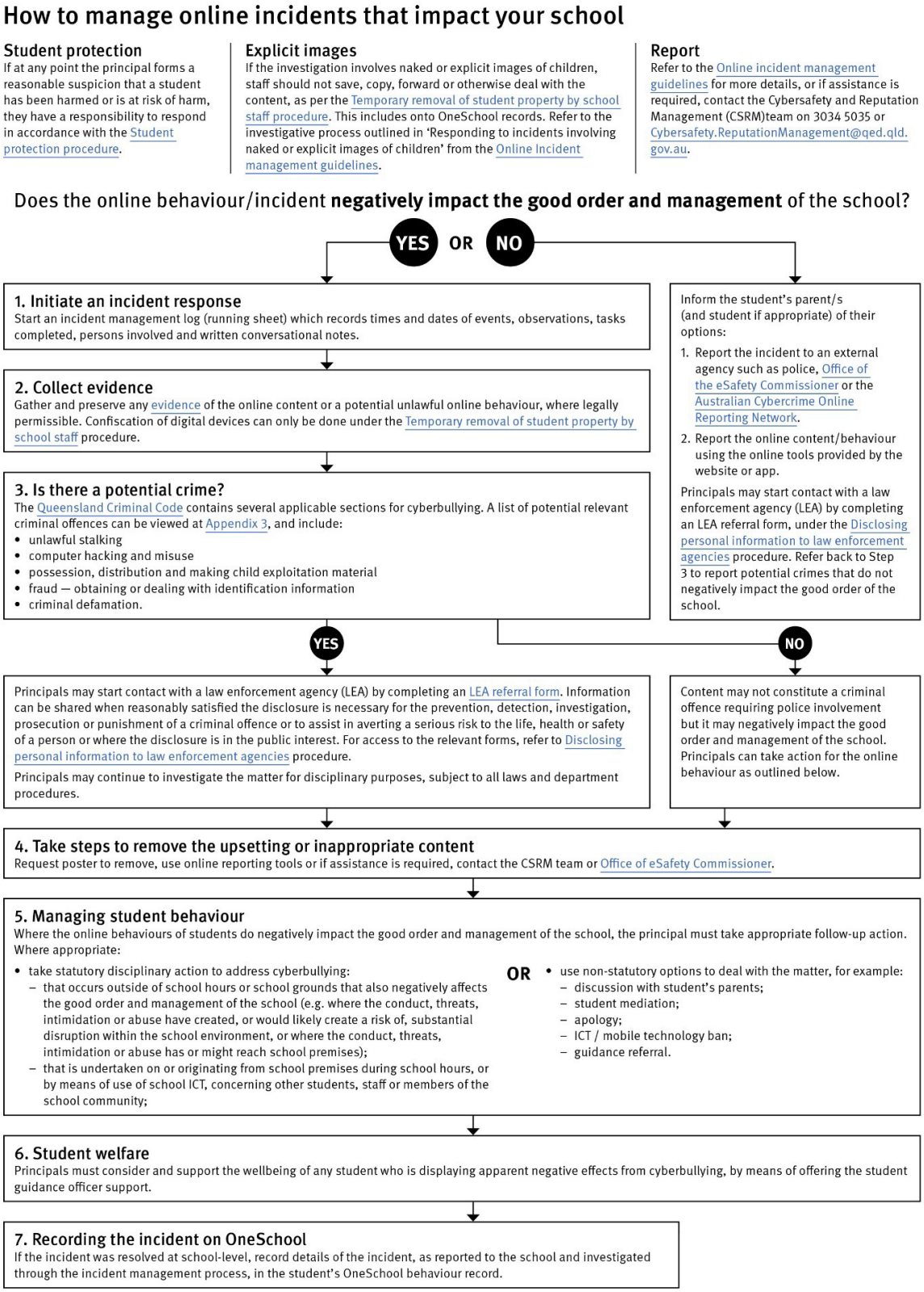
It is important for students, parents and staff to know that state school Principals have the authority to take disciplinary action to address student behaviours that occur outside of school hours or school grounds. This includes cyberbullying. Parents and students who have concerns about cyberbullying incidents occurring during school holidays should immediately seek assistance through the Office of the e-Safety Commissioner or the Queensland Police Service.

Students enrolled at Merrimac State High School may face in-school disciplinary action, such as detention or removal of privileges, or more serious consequences such as suspension or exclusion from school for engaging in behaviour that adversely affects, or is likely to adversely affect, other students or the good order and management of the school. This includes behaviour such as cyberbullying which occurs outside of school hours or settings, for example on the weekend or during school holidays. It also applies to inappropriate online behaviour of enrolled students that is directed towards other community members or students from other school sites.

Parents or other stakeholders who engage in inappropriate online behaviour or use a carriage service to menace, harass or cause offence, inclusive of the School's own social media sites or private staff pages, towards students, staff or other parents may be referred to the Office of the e-Safety Commissioner and/or the Queensland Police Service. If state school staff are participants in cyberbullying they will be referred for investigation to the Integrity and Employee Relations team in the Department of Education.

CYBERBULLYING RESPONSE FLOWCHART FOR SCHOOL STAFF

Merrimac State High School recognises the need to provide intervention and support to all students involved in incidents of bullying, including cyberbullying and follows the process below.



Student Intervention and Support Services

Students who have been subject or witness to bullying have access to a range of internal support staff, as identified in the Student Support Network section earlier in this document. Students are, however, also encouraged to approach any staff member with whom they feel comfortable sharing their concerns, regardless of their role in the school. All staff at Merrimac State High School are familiar with the response expectations to reports of bullying, and will act quickly to ensure students' concerns are addressed. Depending on the nature of the reported bullying incident, a formal plan of action may be developed and documented to support the implementation of strategies to assist the student.

Students who engage in bullying behaviours towards others will also be provided with support to assist them to use more socially acceptable and appropriate behaviours in their interactions. This includes counselling, social development programs, referral to mental health services or involvement in a restorative justice strategy. School disciplinary measures may also be used to reinforce the seriousness with which the community takes all incidents of bullying. These measures may include internal school suspension, withdrawal from social events or celebrations or more severe punishments such as suspension or exclusion from school.

Appropriate Use of Social Media

Recent Queensland Government legislation prohibits the use of social media platforms by children under the prescribed age of 16. In accordance with this legislation, the school is committed to supporting safe, lawful, and responsible use of digital technologies.

The internet, mobile phones and social media (carriage service) provide wonderful opportunities for some students to network and socialise online. While these technologies provide positive platforms for sharing ideas, they also have the potential to cause pain and suffering to individuals, groups or even whole communities.

All members of the school community share responsibility for ensuring online environments reflect the same standards of respect, safety, and integrity expected within the school. Parents and carers are expected to support the legislative requirements by reinforcing the age restrictions on social media use, modelling positive online behaviour, and working in partnership with the school to promote digital wellbeing.

It's important to remember that sometimes negative comments posted about the school community have a greater impact than expected. This guide offers some information about how to use social media in relation to comments or posts about the school community. Reputations of students, teachers, schools, principals and even parents can be permanently damaged — and in some cases, serious instances of inappropriate online behaviour are dealt with by police and the court system.

Being aware of a few simple strategies can help keep the use of social media positive and constructive:

- Before you post something online, ask yourself if the community or individual really need to know. Is it relevant, positive and helpful?
- Remember that what you post online is a direct reflection of who you are. People will potentially form lasting opinions of you based on what you post online.
- Be a good role model. If things get heated online consider logging out and taking a few moments to relax and think. Hasty, emotive responses could inflame situations unnecessarily.
- Be mindful when commenting, try to keep general and avoid posting anything that could identify individuals.
- Taking a few moments to think about the content you are about to post could save upset, embarrassment, and possible legal action.
- As a parent you have a role in supervising and regulating your child's online activities at home and its impact on the reputation and privacy of others. Parents are their child's first teachers — so they will learn online behaviours from you.

Is it appropriate to comment or post about schools, staff or students?

Parental and community feedback is important for schools and the department. If you have a compliment, complaint or enquiry about an issue at school, the best approach is to speak directly to the school about the matter, rather than discussing it in a public forum.

Possible civil or criminal ramifications of online commentary

A serious instance of inappropriate online behaviour may constitute a criminal offence and become a police matter. For example, online content may substantiate the offence of ‘using a carriage service to menace, harass or cause offence’ (Criminal Code Act 1995 (Cth) s. 474.17). School staff may contact their union or obtain personal legal advice if they feel that online content seriously impacts their reputation. Defamatory online content may give rise to litigation under the Defamation Act 2005 (Qld).

Merrimac State High School – Anti-Bullying Contract

The Anti-Bullying Contract provides a clear outline of the way our community at Merrimac State High School works together to establish a safe, supportive and disciplined school environment. This contract is provided to all students and their parents upon enrolment, and may be revisited with individual students if particular problems around bullying arise.

We agree to work together to improve the quality of relationships in our community at Merrimac State High School. It is through intentional consideration of our behaviour and communication that we can reduce the occurrence of bullying, and improve the quality of the schooling experience for everyone.

The agreed national definition for Australian schools describes bullying as

- ongoing and deliberate misuse of power in relationships through repeated verbal, physical and/or social behaviour that intends to cause physical, social and/or psychological harm;
- involving an individual or a group misusing their power, or perceived power, over one or more persons who feel unable to stop it from happening;
- happening in person or online, via various digital platforms and devices and it can be obvious (overt) or hidden (covert). Bullying behaviour is repeated, or has the potential to be repeated, over time (for example, through sharing of digital records);
- having immediate, medium and long-term effects on those involved, including bystanders. Single incidents and conflict or fights between equals, whether in person or online, are not defined as bullying.

We believe that no one deserves to be mistreated and that everyone regardless of race, colour, religion, immigration status, nationality, size, gender, popularity, athletic capability, academic outcomes, social ability, or intelligence has the right to feel safe, secure, and respected.

I agree to:

- Treat everyone with kindness and respect.
- Abide by the school's anti-bullying policies and procedures.
- Support individuals who have been bullied.
- Speak out against verbal, relational, physical bullying and cyber bullying.
- Notify a parent, teacher, or school administrator when bullying does occur.

Student signature:

Parent signature:

School representative signature:

Date:

SUN SMART POLICY

Australia has one of the highest rates of skin cancer in the world, with two in three Australians developing some form of skin cancer before age 70. Melanoma is the third most commonly diagnosed cancers in Australian males and females, yet most skin cancers can be prevented by using sun protection measures at appropriate times of the year.

The sun's ultraviolet (UV) radiation is the major cause of skin cancer. UV damage accumulated during childhood and adolescence is strongly associated with an increased risk of skin cancer later in life. Given school hours fall within peak UV periods of the day, a comprehensive policy will assist schools to adopt healthy UV practices.

IMPLEMENTATION

The sun protection times are forecast by the Bureau of Meteorology for the time of day UV levels are predicted to reach 3 or higher, based on your location. At these levels, sun protection is recommended for all skin types. In Queensland, UV levels are forecast to reach 3 or higher at all times of the year.

To assist with the implementation of this policy, staff and students are encouraged to access the daily local sun protection times via the free SunSmart app, sunsmart.com.au or bom.gov.au.

The sun protection measures listed in this policy are used for all outdoor activities **during the daily local sun protection times.** This policy is considered in the planning of all outdoor events such as assemblies, camps, excursions and sporting events.
Implementation throughout Terms 1 and 4 only is insufficient to protect against UV risks.

PROCEDURES

1. Clothing

- The formal school uniform/dress codes include:
  - A shirt with a collar that sits close to the neck, above the collarbone.
  - Longer-style skirts, shorts and pants at least to the knee.
- The sport uniform/dress code includes:
  - A shirt that covers the shoulders well.
  - Longer-style skirts, shorts and pants (at least to the mid-thigh).
- Students must wear rash vests or t-shirts during all water-based activities at outdoor venues, except during competition and specific timed swim activities. When students are not in the pool (ie at carnivals or spectating), students must wear board shorts or school sports shorts".
- Students are strongly encouraged to wear the school hat. Merrimac State High School strives to empower students to develop the capacity to make healthy and safe choices as students' progress through their adolescence years.
- The school supplies broad-spectrum, water-resistant sunscreen for staff and students to use AND/OR students are reminded and encouraged to bring their own broad-spectrum, water-resistant sunscreen to school.
- Staff encourage students to use sunscreen and provide time for students to apply sunscreen before going outdoors.
- The school ensures shade is available in the school grounds, particularly in areas where students congregate – for example, lunch areas, canteen, and outdoor lesson areas.
- The school ensures shade provision is considered in plans for future buildings and grounds.
- The availability of shade is considered when planning all outdoor activities and excursions.
- Students are encouraged to use available areas of shade when outside, particularly if they do not have appropriate hats or outdoor clothing.

MONITORING AND REVIEW

- The school staff monitor and review the effectiveness of the sun protection policy (at least every three years) and revise the policy when required.
- SunSmart policy updates and requirements will be made available to staff, families, students and visitors.

RESTRICTIVE PRACTICES

School staff at Merrimac State High School need to respond to student behaviour that presents a risk of physical harm to the student themselves or others. It is anticipated that most instances of risky behaviour can be de-escalated and resolved quickly. On some rarer occasions, a student's behaviour may continue to escalate and staff need to engage immediately with positive and proactive strategies aimed at supporting the student to manage their emotional arousal and behaviour.

In some very rare situations, where there is immediate risk of physical harm to the student or other people, and when all other alternative strategies have failed to reduce the risk, it may be necessary for staff to use restrictive practices.

The use of restrictive practices will always be as a last resort, when there is no other available option for reducing immediate risk to the student, staff or other people. Restrictive practices are not used for punishment or as a disciplinary measure.

The department's **Restrictive practices procedure** is written with consideration for the protection of everyone's human rights, health, safety and welfare. There are six fundamental principles:

1. Regard to the human rights of those students
2. Safeguards students, staff and others from harm
3. Ensures transparency and accountability
4. Places importance on communication and consultation with parents and carers
5. Maximises the opportunity for positive outcomes, and 6. Aims to reduce or eliminate the use of restrictive practices.

Very rarely restrictive practices will be planned and staff will employ, when necessary, pre-arranged strategies and methods (of physical restraint/ mechanical restraint/ clinical holding) which are based upon behaviour risk assessment or clinical health need and are recorded in advance. The use of planned strategies will only be where there is foreseeable immediate risk consistent with the **Restrictive practice's procedure**.

Seclusion will not be used as a planned response and will only be used in serious circumstances for managing an unforeseeable situation in an emergency. It will be used for the shortest time possible and in a safe area that presents no additional foreseeable risk to the student. In such emergencies, a staff member will observe the student at all times and seclusion will cease as soon as possible.

Following the use of any restrictive practice, a focused review will help staff to understand how they responded to the risk in any incident that involved the use of a restrictive practice. Staff will consider whether there are other options for managing a similar situation in the future. This strategy works well for reducing the use of restrictive practices.

All incidents of restrictive practices will be recorded and reported in line with departmental procedures.

CRITICAL INCIDENTS

It is important that all school staff have a consistent understanding of how to respond in emergencies involving student behaviour that seriously endangers the student or others. This consistency ensures that appropriate actions are taken to ensure that both students and staff are kept safe.

A critical incident is defined as an occurrence that is sudden, urgent, and usually unexpected, or an occasion requiring immediate action (e.g. in the community, on the road). The aim in these situations is to bring the behaviour of the student under rapid and safe control. It is not a time to try and to punish or discipline the student; it is a crisis management period only.

Staff should follow the documented plan for any student involved in regular critical incidents, which should be saved and available for staff to review in OneSchool.

For unexpected critical incidents, staff should use basic defusing techniques:

1. Avoid escalating the problem behaviour: Avoid shouting, cornering the student, moving into the student's space, touching or grabbing the student, sudden responses, sarcasm, becoming defensive, communicating anger and frustration through body language.

2. Maintain calmness, respect and detachment: Model the behaviour you want students to adopt, stay calm and controlled, use a serious measured tone, choose your language carefully, avoid humiliating the student, be matter of fact and avoid responding emotionally.

3. Approach the student in a non-threatening manner: Move slowly and deliberately toward the problem situation, speak privately to the student/s where possible, speak calmly and respectfully, minimise body language, keep a reasonable distance, establish eye level position, be brief, stay with the agenda, acknowledge cooperation, withdraw if the situation escalates.

4. Follow through: If the student starts displaying the appropriate behaviour briefly acknowledge their choice and re-direct other students' attention towards their usual work/activity. If the student continues with the problem behaviour, then remind them of the expected school behaviour and identify consequences of continued unacceptable behaviour.

5. Debrief: At an appropriate time when there is low risk of re- escalation, help the student to identify the sequence of events that led to the unacceptable behaviour, pinpoint decision moments during the sequence of events, evaluate decisions made, and identify acceptable decision options for future situations

PARENT AND COMMUNITY CODE OF CONDUCT

We welcome parents[1] and other members of our diverse community into our school.

Working together with the school community[2], school staff support the learning and wellbeing of every student, and are entitled to a safe work environment.

Parents and other visitors to our school support safety by ensuring their communications and conduct at the school and school activities is respectful.

ELEMENTS OF ENGAGEMENT	It is expected that parents and visitors to our school will:	Parents and visitors to our school demonstrate this by:
Communication	• **be polite to others**	• using polite spoken and written language
	• **act as positive role models**	• speaking and behaving respectfully at all times
	• **recognise and respect personal differences**	• being compassionate when interacting with others • informing staff if the behaviour of others is negatively impacting them or their family
	• **use the school's communication process to address concerns**	• respecting staff time by accepting they will respond to appropriate communication when they are able • requesting a meeting to discuss any concerns about their child's education – allowing staff time to prepare and appreciating their time may be limited
Collaboration	• **(parents) ensure their child attends school ready to learn**	• taking responsibility for their child arriving and departing school safely on time every day
	• **support the Student Code of Conduct**	• reading and encouraging their child to understand and follow the Student Code of Conduct
School Culture	• **recognise every student is important to us**	• valuing each child's education • acknowledging staff are responsible for supporting the whole school community
	• **contribute to a positive school culture**	• speaking positively about the school and its staff • not making negative comments or gossiping about other school community members, including students – in person, in writing or on social media
	• **work together with staff to resolve issues or concerns**	• understanding, at times, compromises may be necessary
	• **respect people's privacy**	• considering the privacy of all school community members at all times, and understanding that the school cannot share confidential information.

I agree to support Merrimac State High School Parent & Community Code of Conduct.

Parent signature:

Date:

[1] The term 'parent' refers to parents, carers, guardians and people who exercise parental responsibility for a child.

[2] The term 'school community' refers to staff, students, parents, local business and community organisations and visitors to the school.

CONCERNS

Merrimac State High School staff are committed to ensuring every student is supported to feel safe, welcome and valued in our school. There may, however, be occasions where parents need to raise a concern or make a complaint about an issue you feel is adversely affecting their child's education.

All Queensland state schools are committed to ensuring that all complaints - whether they relate to a school staff member or a school's operations - are dealt with in a fair and equitable manner. As a parent or carer, you can express dissatisfaction with the service or action of the Department of Education or its staff, including decisions made or actions taken in a school and/or by the local regional office.

As a complainant, it is your responsibility to:

- give us a clear idea of the issue or concern and your desired solution
- provide all the relevant information when making the complaint
- understand that addressing a complaint can take time
- cooperate respectfully and understand that unreasonable, abusive, or disrespectful conduct will not be tolerated
- let us know if something changes, including if help is no longer needed.

The Department of Education may not proceed with your complaint if your conduct is unreasonable.

In most instances, staff members are told of complaints made about them and offered the right of reply. A complainant also has the right to have a support person throughout the process.

The following three-step approach assists parents and school staff in reaching an outcome that is in the best interests of the student:

1. **Early resolution**: discuss your complaint with the school

The best place to raise any concerns is at the point where the problem or issue arose. You can make an appointment at the school to discuss your complaint with your child's teacher or the principal. You are also welcome to lodge your complaint in writing or over the phone. You can also make a complaint through QGov.

Complaints may be lodged by telephone, writing or in electronic format. Email addresses can be accessed through the schools directory.

2. **Internal review:** contact the local Regional Office

If, after taking the early resolution step, you are dissatisfied with the outcome of your complaint or how the complaint was handled, you can ask the local regional office to conduct a review. You need to submit a Request for internal review form within 28 days of receiving the complaint outcome.

3. **External review**: contact a review authority

if you are dissatisfied after the internal review, you may wish to contact a review authority, such as the Queensland Ombudsman, and request an independent, external review. More information about external review options is available at www.ombudsman.qld.gov.au.

Some matters need to be handled in a different way to school matters and will be referred to other areas in the department. These include:

- issues about harm, or risk of harm, to a student attending a state school, which must be managed in accordance with the Student protection procedure.
- complaints about corrupt conduct, public interest disclosures; or certain decisions made under legislation, which will be dealt with as outlined in the Excluded Complaints Factsheet.

LEGISLATIVE DELEGATIONS

LEGISLATION

In this section of the Merrimac State High School Code of Conduct are links to legislation which influences form and content of Queensland state school discipline procedures.

- Anti-Discrimination Act 1991 (Qld)
- Child Protection Act 1999 (Qld)
- Commonwealth Disability Discrimination Act 1992
- Commonwealth Disability Standards for Education 2005
- Criminal Code Act 1899 (Qld)
- Education (General Provisions) Act 2006
- Education (General Provisions) Regulation 2017
- Human Rights Act 2019 (Qld)
- Information Privacy Act 2009 (Qld)
- Judicial Review Act 1991 (Qld)
- Right to Information Act 2009 (Qld)
- Police Powers and Responsibilities Act 2000 (Qld)
- Workplace Health and Safety Act 2011 (Qld)
- Workplace Health and Safety Regulation 2011 (Cwth)
- Criminal Code (Serious Vilification and Hate Crimes) Act 2023
- Online Safety Act 2021
- Criminal Code Act 1995
- Work Health and Safety Act 2011
- Education Qld Occupational Violence Campaign
- Queensland Government Transport and motoring – Rules for personal mobility devices

DELEGATIONS

Under the Education (General Provisions) Act 2006, state school principals are responsible for “controlling and regulating student discipline in the school”.

Principals are afforded a number of **non-delegable powers** to assist them to meet this obligation, including the authority to suspend, exclude or cancel the enrolment of a student at the school. These decision making responsibilities cannot be delegated to other staff in the school, such as deputy principals.

The details of these responsibilities are outlined in the legislative instruments of delegation and instruments of authorisation provided below:

- Education (General Provisions) Act 2006 Director-General’s delegations
- Education (General Provisions) Act 2006 Minister’s delegations
- Education (General Provisions) Act 2006 Director-General’s authorisations

Related Procedures and Guidelines

These are related procedures or guidelines which school staff use to inform decisions and actions around matters associated with student's wellbeing, behaviour and learning.

- Cancellation of enrolment
- Complex case management
- Customer complaints management policy and procedure
- Disclosing personal information to law enforcement agencies
- Enrolment in state primary, secondary and special schools
- Hostile people on school premises, wilful disturbance and trespass
- Inclusive education
- Police and Child Safety Officer interviews and searches with students
- Restrictive practices
- Refusal to enrol – Risk to safety or wellbeing
- Student discipline
- Student dress code
- Student protection
- Supporting students' mental health and wellbeing
- Temporary removal of student property by school staff
- Use of ICT systems
- Using mobile devices

Resources

- Australian Professional Standards for Teachers
- Behaviour Foundations professional development package (school employees only)
- Bullying. No Way!
- eheadspace
- Kids Helpline
- Office of the eSafety Commissioner
- Parent and community engagement framework
- Parentline
- Queensland Department of Education School Discipline
- Raising Children Network
- Student Wellbeing Hub

MANAGEMENT OF MAJOR DISCIPLINARY MATTERS CHART

Problem Behaviour	Definitions	Possible Consequences[1]
Abusive language	Student delivers verbal messages that include swearing, name calling, or use of words in an inappropriate way.	Focused or Intensive Consequences including possible suspension
Occupational Abuse	Offensive language directed at a staff member, threatening behaviour that prevents a staff member from doing their job.	Focused or Intensive Consequences including possible suspension/ exclusion
Bomb Threat/False Alarm	Student delivers a false message of possible explosive materials being on campus, near campus, and/or pending explosion.	Focused or Intensive Consequences including possible exclusion
Bullying	The delivery of direct or technology-based messages that involves intimidation, teasing, taunting, threats, or name calling.	Focused or Intensive Consequences including possible suspension
Bullying	Ongoing bullying and/or intimidation of others.	Focused or Intensive Consequences including possible exclusion
Defiance	Student refuses to follow adult directions.	Focused or Intensive Consequences including possible suspension
Consistent and Persistent Misbehaviour	Persistent misbehaviour despite previous warnings and support.	Focused or Intensive Consequences including possible exclusion
Disrespect	Student is disrespectful or dismissive towards adults or students.	Focused or Intensive Consequences including possible suspension
Occupational Disrespect	Student is disrespectful or dismissive towards adults.	Focused or Intensive Consequences including possible suspension
Safety	Student failing to comply with legal requirements for e-bikes, bicycles, (eg helmets and observing speed limits)	Focused or Intensive Consequences including possible suspension
Use/possession sexual items	Possession or sharing of pornographic material or sexual items/materials.	Focused or Intensive Consequences including suspension and possible exclusion
Sexual Misbehaviour	Engaging in sex acts, sexual behaviour, lewd behaviour or nudity (Full or partial) during school.	Focused or Intensive Consequences including possible exclusion
Disruption	Student engages in behaviour causing an interruption in a class or school activity or event. Includes but not limited to sustained loud talk, yelling, or screaming; noise with materials; and/or sustained out-of-seat behaviour.	Focused or Intensive Consequences including possible suspension
Hostile Disruption	Aggressive behaviour including yelling, throwing objects (not causing harm) or other actions (that could include kicking, punching, smashing objects), inappropriate or illegal use of private vehicles such as hooning.	Focused or Intensive Consequences including possible exclusion

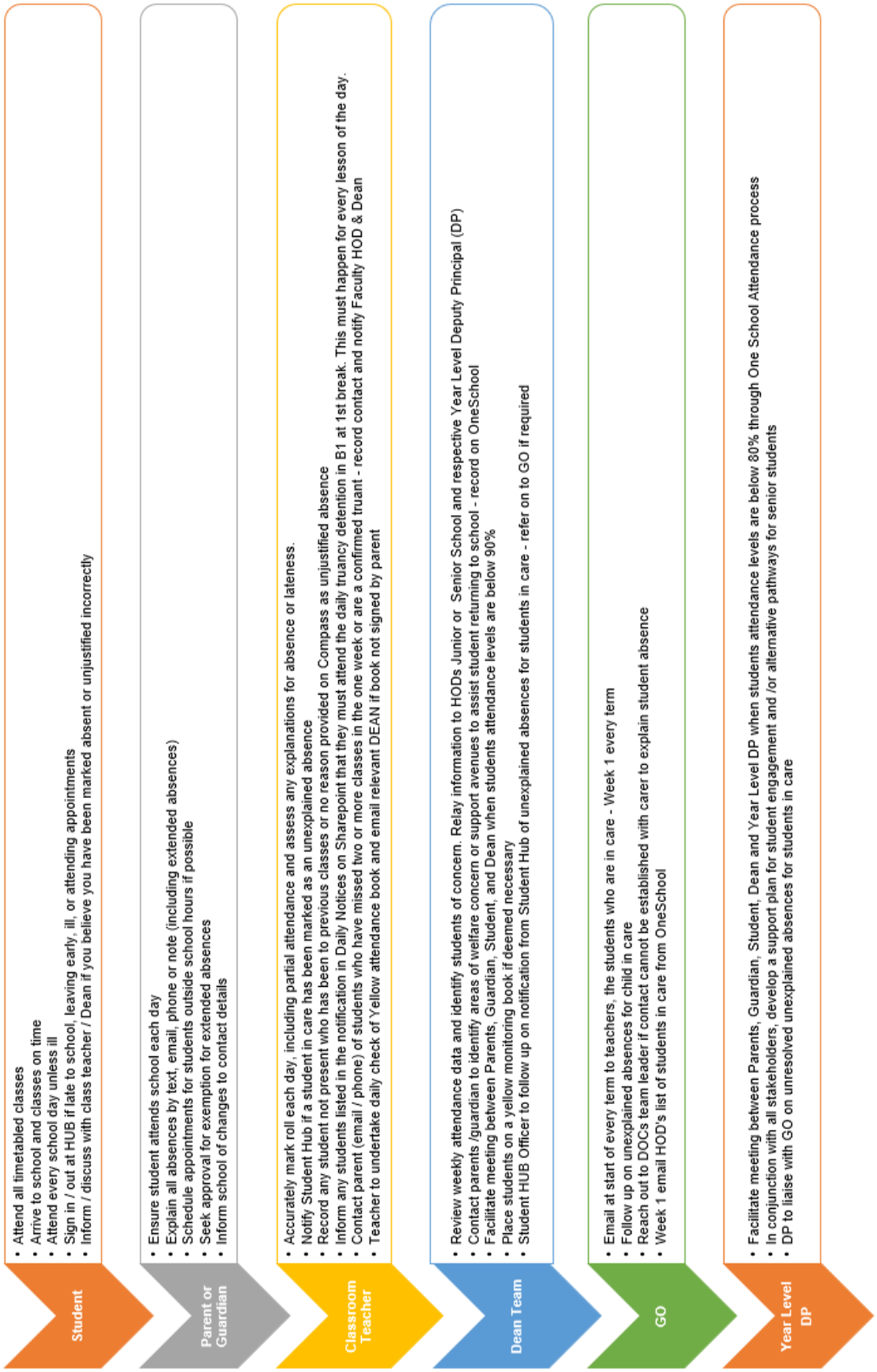
MANAGEMENT OF MAJOR DISCIPLINARY MATTERS CHART

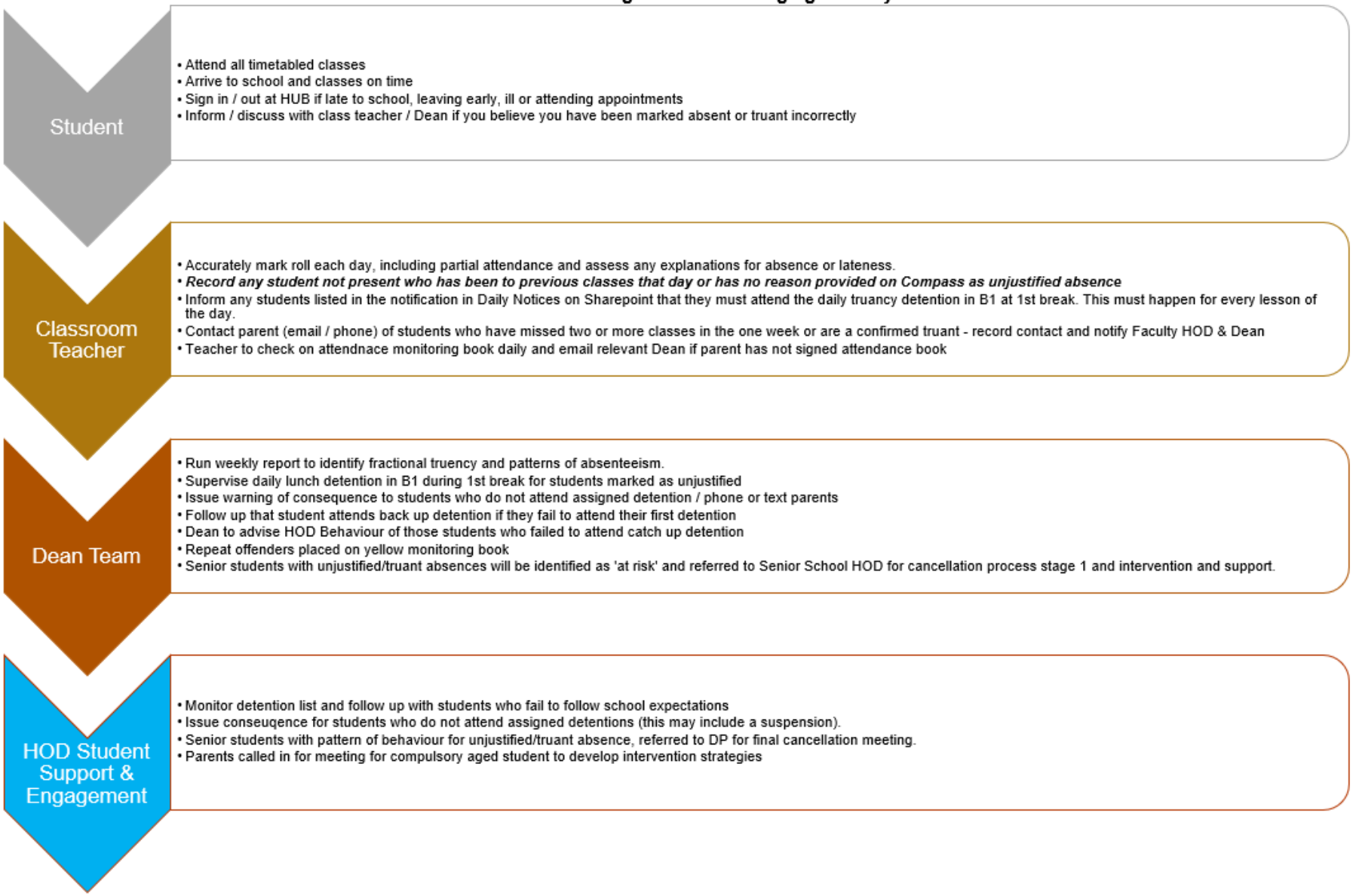
Problem Behaviour	Definitions	Possible Consequences[1]
Dress code	Student wears clothing that is not within the dress code guidelines defined by the school.	Focused or Intensive Consequences
Fighting	Student is involved in mutual participation in an incident involving physical violence, organising or planning events to promote physical violence including but not limited to social media sites and photographing/filming and sharing images.	Focused or Intensive Consequences including possible exclusion
Harassment	The delivery of disrespectful messages in any format related to gender, ethnicity, sex, race, religion, disability, physical features, or other identity characteristics.	Focused or Intensive Consequences including possible suspension/ exclusion
Persistent Harassment	Ongoing delivery of disrespectful messages in any format related to gender, ethnicity, sex, race, religion, disability, physical features, or other identity characteristics.	Focused or Intensive Consequences including possible exclusion
Occupational Harassment/ Threats	The delivery of threats or disrespectful messages in any format related to gender, ethnicity, sex, race, religion, disability, physical features, or any other identity characteristics to a member of staff or community.	Focused or Intensive Consequences including possible suspension/ exclusion
Physical aggression	Student engages in actions involving physical contact with other students or staff where injury may occur (e.g., hitting, slapping, punching, hitting with an object, kicking, hair pulling, scratching, etc.).	Focused or Intensive Consequences including possible exclusion
Encouragement of Violence	Students encourage, facilitate or incite violence using any form of communication. (Includes encouraging others onto school premises).	Focused or Intensive Consequences including possible exclusion
Premeditated acts of violence	Student engages in planned actions so as to cause physical harm to another student, inclusive of promoting violence on social media channels.	Focused or Intensive Consequences including possible exclusion
Occupational Violence	Student engages in actions involving physical contact, verbal abuse or intimidation where injury may occur (e.g., hitting, punching, hitting with an object, kicking, hair pulling, scratching, etc.) with a member of staff or community	Focused or Intensive Consequences including possible exclusion
Plagiarism	Student has signed a person's name or claims someone else's work as their own. Sharing work with intent to allow plagiarism, inclusive of utilising web based technologies such as CHATGPT.	Focused or Intensive Consequences including possible suspension. Failure to complete course and no credits.
Property misuse	Student engages in misuse of property, which could include but not limited to behaviour involving throwing objects or using objects in an unsafe manner causing injury.	Focused or Intensive Consequences including possible suspension

MANAGEMENT OF MAJOR DISCIPLINARY MATTERS CHART

Problem Behaviour	Definitions	Possible Consequences[1]
Property damage	Student participates in an activity that results in destruction, damage or disfigurement of property.	Focused or Intensive Consequences including possible suspension
Substance possession involving tobacco and other legal substances	Student is in possession of or is using tobacco, alcohol, other prohibited substances or implements such as but not limited to lighter, matches, cigarette papers, vaping device, medication (prescription or otherwise).	Focused or Intensive Maximum consequences including possible suspension
Substance supply involving tobacco and other legal substances	Student is supplying tobacco, alcohol, other prohibited substances or implements such as but not limited to lighter, matches, cigarette papers vaping device, medication (prescription or otherwise).	Focused or Intensive Consequences including possible exclusion.
Substance possession involving illegal substances	Student is in possession of or is using illegal drugs/substances/imitations or implements such as, but not limited to cones, cutters, bongs, papers, lighters, matches, pipes, needles, syringes and other drug paraphernalia, vaping products which may or may not include illegal/ legal substances such as, but not limited, to liquid nicotine etc.	Focused or Intensive Consequences including possible exclusion
Substance supply involving illegal substances	Student is supplying illegal drugs/substances/imitations or implements such as, but not limited to cones, cutters, bongs, papers, lighters, matches, cutters, pipes, needles, syringes, scales “baggies”, vapes, vape liquid, chargers.	Focused or Intensive Consequences including possible exclusion
Technology violation	Student engages in inappropriate (as defined by school or law) use of mobile phone, drone, smartwatch, camera, computer or other communication device. Student undertakes fraudulent or illegal activity such as attempting to hack, implementing DoS attacks, use of key loggers, impersonating staff or other students or using AI technology to create images such a deep fakes and/or sharing these images.	Focused or Intensive Consequences including possible exclusion
Theft	Student is involved in theft by being in possession of, having passed on, or being responsible for removing someone else's property.	Focused or Intensive Consequences including possible exclusion
Use/possession of combustibles	Student is/was in possession of substances/objects readily capable of causing bodily harm and/or property damage (e.g. matches, lighters, firecrackers, petrol, lighter fluid, aerosols).	Focused or Intensive Consequences including possible exclusion
Use/possession of weapons	Student is in possession of knives and guns (real or replica), or other objects capable of causing bodily harm.	Focused or Intensive Consequences including possible exclusion
Misbehaviour	Serious behaviour in a private capacity that is prejudicial to the good order and management of the school.	Focused or Intensive Consequences including possible exclusion
Misbehaviour	Serious behaviour at school interrupting the good order and management of the school or interrupting the learning of others through unnecessary interruption.	Focused or Intensive Consequences including possible exclusion
Criminal Misbehaviour	An offence, serious or otherwise, for which the student has been charged or is waiting to be sentenced.	Focused or Intensive Consequences including possible exclusion / suspension: charge related offence.

APPENDIX 2: MANAGING STUDENT ATTENDANCE



APPENDIX 3: MANAGING TRUANCY

Merrimac State High School - Managing Truancy