



Meringandan State School

# Student Code of Conduct 2024-2026

**Meringandan State School:** *Igniting Learning- Shaping the BEST future together!*

***Equity and Excellence: realising the potential of every student***

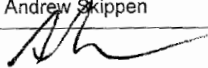
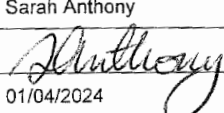
*Equity and Excellence outlines the government's vision for a progressive, high-performing education system. Equity and Excellence provides clarity for schools about priorities and expectations, with differentiated support targeted to each school's context and needs.*

Queensland Department of Education

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## Endorsement

Principal Name:	Andrew Skippen
Principal Signature:	
Date:	01/04/2024
P/C President Name:	Sarah Anthony
P/C President Signature:	
Date:	01/04/2024

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## Purpose

Meringandan State School is committed to providing a safe, respectful and disciplined learning environment for all students, staff, parents and visitors.

The Meringandan State 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.

## Principal's Forward

**Meringandan State School:** *Igniting Learning- Shaping the BEST future together!*

Meringandan takes its name from its Indigenous origins – fire and clay. Our vision connects with our history and reflects our aspirations to ignite learning in each and every student.

Meringandan State School is an inclusive school with high expectations for attendance, behaviour and learning supported by a positive and supportive environment.

Our school values shape the expectations for all members of the school community, across all contexts, and are the foundation for our Positive Behaviour for Learning and Expectations Matrix. At Meringandan, we value an environment that challenges and supports students to be their BEST:

**B**e respectful  
**E**ngaged Learning  
**S**tay safe  
**T**otally Responsible

## Whole School Approach to Discipline

Meringandan State 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.

At Meringandan State 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. 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 Meringandan State School 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 principal.

## 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 four Positive Behaviour for Learning (PBL) expectations in place for students, always our BEST:

**B**e Respectful  
**E**ngaged Learning  
**S**tay Safe  
**T**otally Responsible

### **Students**

PBL school expectations and routines for students are included in this document and are displayed throughout the school. In addition, each classroom will have their own set of routines and expectations, that mirror the school expectations, to help students and visitors understand the expectations and meet the standards we hold for everyone at Meringandan State School.

## Parents and staff

The table below explains the PBL expectations for parents when visiting our school and the standards we commit to as staff.

### Be Respectful

<i><b>What we expect to see from you</b></i>	<i><b>What you can expect from us</b></i>
You make an appointment to speak with the class teacher or principal to discuss any matters relating to your child.	We will respond as soon as practicable to your request for an appointment and negotiate a mutually agreeable date and time with you.
You are respectful in your conversations at home about school staff.	We will ensure positive behaviours are role modelled for all students.
You seek out opportunities to provide positive feedback to the classroom teacher about their work with the class, a student or colleagues.	We will work closely with families to accommodate their personal needs, including work commitments, finances and family structure.
You respect school, student and staff privacy in your online communications.	We will act quickly to address social media issues that affect staff, students or families.
You stay informed about school news and activities by reading the school newsletter and other materials sent home by school staff.	We will use the electronic school newsletter as the primary means of notifying parents about school news, excursions or events. We may also send paper notices home with students.
You recognise people are different and will be non-judgemental, fair and equitable to others in the school community.	We will welcome and celebrate a diverse school community with recognition of significant social, cultural and historical events.

### Engaged Learning

<i><b>What we expect to see from you</b></i>	<i><b>What you can expect from us</b></i>
You share relevant information about your child's learning, social and behavioural needs with school staff.	We will share relevant information with you about your child's learning, social and behavioural progress at school.
You support your child to meet the learning and behavioural expectations at school.	We are clear about our learning and behavioural expectations, and will contact you to provide feedback about your child's progress.
You help your child to see the strengths and benefits in diversity and difference in their classmates.	We will promote every child's individuality and build a cohesive, inclusive classroom and school culture.

## Stay Safe

<i><b>What we expect to see from you</b></i>	<i><b>What you can expect from us</b></i>
You leave and collect your child from the designated area at school on time as advised by the school.	We will give clear guidance about a designated area for parents to leave and collect students.
Ensure your child follows the bus code of conduct for safe travel.	We will provide school staff to supervise students safely off and on to the bus. We will support the bus company to enforce the bus code of conduct.
Ensure your child follows safely expectations travelling to and from school .	We will reinforce safe transition to and from school.

## Totally Responsible

<i><b>What we expect to see from you</b></i>	<i><b>What you can expect from us</b></i>
You respect the obligation of staff to maintain student and family privacy.	We will maintain confidentiality about information relating to staff and matters relating to your child and family.
You ensure your children attend school every day and notify the school promptly of any absences or changes in contact details.	We will create a safe, supportive and inclusive environment for every student.
You notice when others need help, parents, staff and students, and ask if there is anything you can do to assist.	We will check in with you about your child's needs or any support your family may require.
You take a positive, solution-focused approach to resolving complaints.	We will nominate a contact person for you to work with to resolve a school related complaint.

## Consideration of Individual Circumstances

Staff at Meringandan State School take into account 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 equity, 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 fair. 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 punishment 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.

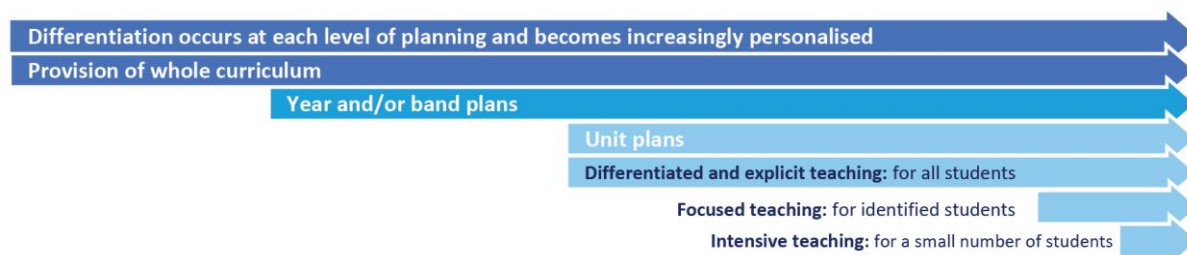
If you have concerns about the behaviour of another student at the school, or the way our staff have responded to their behaviour, please make an appointment with the principal to discuss the matter.

## Differentiated and Explicit Teaching

Meringandan State School is a disciplined school environment that provides differentiated teaching to respond to the learning needs of all students. This involves teaching expected behaviours and providing opportunities for students to practise these behaviours. Teachers reinforce expected behaviours, provide feedback and correction, and opportunities for practise.


Teachers at Meringandan State School vary what students are taught, how they are taught and how students can demonstrate what they know as part of this differentiated approach to behaviour. These decisions about differentiation are made in response to data and day-to-day monitoring that indicates the behavioural learning needs of students. This enables our teachers to purposefully plan a variety of ways to engage students; assist them to achieve the expected learning; and to demonstrate their learning.


There are three main layers to differentiation, as illustrated in the diagram below. This model is the same used for academic and pedagogical differentiation.



These three layers map directly to the tiered approach discussed earlier in the Learning and Behaviour section. For example, in the PBL framework, Tier 1 is differentiated and explicit teaching for all students, Tier 2 is focussed teaching for identified students and Tier 3 is intensive teaching for a small number of students. Each layer provides progressively more personalised supports for students.

Every classroom in our school uses both the PBL Expectations Matrix and PBL Routines Matrix, illustrated below, as a basis for developing their behaviour standards. Using this matrix, the class teacher works with all students to explain exactly what each of the expectations look, sound and feel like in their classroom. The completed matrix is on display in every classroom and throughout the school, used as the basis of teaching expectations throughout the year and revisited regularly to address any new or emerging issues.

 <b>Meringandan State School Expectations Matrix– <i>Always our BEST</i></b>						
	ALL SETTINGS	CLASSROOM	PLAYGROUND	EXCURSIONS	BEFORE/AFTER SCHOOL	ONLINE
<b>BE RESPECTFUL</b>	<b>Follow</b> the uniform code <b>Tell</b> the truth <b>Embrace</b> differences (Everyone is an individual) <b>Follow</b> adult directions <b>Kind</b> words, kind tone, kind actions <b>Use</b> your manners <b>Gain</b> peer attention in appropriate ways <b>Follow all</b> expectations at celebrations and events	<b>Respect</b> others' right to learn <b>Inside</b> voices <b>Wait</b> until called on to speak <b>On</b> task responses and conversations	<b>Take</b> turns <b>Follow</b> game rules <b>Include</b> others <b>Share</b> equipment and spaces <b>Only</b> use resources from the Nature Play Area <b>Respect</b> all living things <b>Respect</b> others' Nature Play creations for the day	<b>Follow</b> all expectations	<b>Quiet</b> talking and sitting	<b>Be</b> considerate of others online <b>Use</b> resources appropriately and respectfully
<b>ENGAGED</b>	<b>Be</b> school ready <b>Eyes</b> and ears on speaker <b>Have</b> a go <b>Be</b> a learner	<b>Do</b> my best <b>Choose</b> the BEST attitude	<b>Learn</b> new games			<b>Use</b> technology for learning
<b>STAY SAFE</b>	<b>Hands,</b> feet, objects and unkind words to myself <b>Walk</b> quietly when moving around school <b>Report</b> dangers and strangers <b>Clean</b> body, tidy appearance <b>Straight</b> there, straight back <b>Safe</b> choices and actions <b>Stay</b> inside the school fence	<b>Enter</b> classroom only when teacher is present <b>Ask</b> permission to enter and leave classroom <b>Walk</b> inside	<b>Be</b> sun safe <b>Hat</b> to play outside <b>Stay</b> in my area <b>Walk</b> on hard surfaces <b>Follow</b> safety instructions for snake sightings <b>Entering</b> and exiting the Nature Play Area <b>Pieces</b> of nature are for building, foraging and creating <b>Walk</b> in the Nature Play Area	<b>Stay</b> with your group	<b>Wait</b> for the bell <b>Follow</b> the road rules <b>Be</b> bike safe <b>Play</b> areas and equipment school hours only <b>Straight</b> to school <b>Straight</b> home	<b>Follow</b> electronic devices policy <b>Report</b> incidents or damage to staff <b>Keep</b> my username and passwords safe
<b>TOTALLY</b>	<b>Every day</b> counts <b>Right</b> place, on time <b>Stop,</b> look and listen-on the signal <b>Care</b> for myself, others and places <b>Ignore</b> others' inappropriate behaviour	<b>Be</b> ready <b>Desk</b> and room tidy  <i>Igniting Learning</i>	<b>Look</b> for solutions (ways to help) <b>Taps</b> off  <i>Shaping the BEST future together!</i>	<b>My</b> belongings my responsibility	<b>Arrive</b> on time <b>Leave</b> on time <b>Best</b> behaviour on the way to and from school	<b>Look</b> after devices <b>Hand</b> mobile devices into the office

 <b>Meringandan State School Routines Matrix- Always our BEST</b>		
<b>Late to School:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Go to office with parent</li> <li>Sign in</li> <li>Take late slip to class teacher</li> <li>Enter room quietly</li> </ul>	<b>Walking Around the School:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Line up at designated area</li> <li>Teacher leads from behind</li> <li>Follow the 4s               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>straight</li> <li>silent</li> <li>sensible</li> </ul> </li> <li>stay in line (1 or 2)</li> </ul>	<b>Library:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Take a book mark</li> <li>Slot it in your book's place</li> <li>Sit quietly to read</li> <li>Whisper voices only</li> <li>Cushions are for sitting</li> <li>Line up</li> <li>Push chairs in</li> <li>Stack cushions neatly</li> <li>Return books and book marks</li> <li>Line up respectfully</li> </ul>
<b>Before School:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sit in designated area</li> <li>Quiet voices</li> <li>Wait for the bell</li> </ul>		
<b>Lock Down:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Be calm and quiet</li> <li>Follow teacher directions</li> </ul>	<b>Toilet:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Straight there</li> <li>Straight in</li> <li>One person per toilet</li> <li>Flush the toilet</li> <li>Wash your hands</li> <li>Use only what you need               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>soap, water, paper</li> </ul> </li> <li>Leave it clean</li> <li>Straight out</li> <li>Straight back</li> </ul>	<b>Computer Lab:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Clean hands</li> <li>Walk inside</li> <li>Work quietly</li> <li>One person, one chair, one computer</li> <li>Safe sitting</li> <li>Ask for help in appropriate ways</li> <li>Log off</li> <li>Chairs in</li> <li>Leave the lab clean and tidy</li> </ul>
<b>Fire Drill:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Be calm and quiet</li> <li>Follow teacher directions</li> <li>Move to designated area</li> <li>Sit with class</li> <li>Listen for name and reply</li> </ul>		
<b>Bus:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Walk to bus with class group</li> <li>Line up and wait for the teacher</li> <li>Give bus roll to teacher</li> <li>Walk safely in lines to bus</li> <li>Stay seated safely the entire journey               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Face forwards</li> <li>Bag on floor</li> <li>Quiet voices</li> </ul> </li> <li>Listen to and follow adult instructions</li> <li>Straight to school/ straight home</li> </ul>	<b>Assembly:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Walk responsibly and quietly to assembly</li> <li>Sit in single file in your allocated class spot</li> <li>Sit quietly</li> <li>Face the front with legs crossed and hands in laps</li> <li>If receiving an award, move quickly and quietly to the front when asked</li> <li>Raise hand and be silent on signal</li> <li>Stand respectfully for national anthem, face flags and place hands by your sides</li> </ul>	<b>First Bell:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Stop playing and leave area</li> <li>Walk on hard surfaces</li> <li>Return any borrowed equipment to sports shed</li> <li>Go to the toilet</li> <li>Wash hands</li> <li>Have a drink</li> <li>Line up in designated area</li> <li>Wait for the second bell</li> </ul>
<b>Pick Up Zone:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sit down and wait for the teacher</li> <li>When your name is called walk to the gate</li> <li>Stay on the left while at the gate</li> <li>Enter the car from the path</li> <li>Listen to and follow adult instructions</li> <li>Straight to school/ straight home</li> </ul>		
<b>Office:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Wait at the front desk</li> <li>Speak politely</li> </ul>	<b>Eating Area:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sit to eat</li> <li>Sit to wait</li> <li>Stay in my area</li> <li>Quiet voice</li> <li>Healthy food first</li> <li>Eat my own food</li> <li>Listen for the signal</li> <li>Pick up rubbish</li> <li>Walk on hard surfaces</li> </ul>	<b>Zen Den:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enter only when a teacher is inside</li> <li>Tell the teacher you are there</li> <li>Quiet/whisper voices</li> <li>Bring one friend</li> <li>Calm bodies</li> <li>Use Zen Den equipment only</li> <li>Ask for a book</li> <li>Pack up before leaving</li> </ul>
	<b>Entering Other Classes:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Knock on door</li> <li>Speak politely</li> </ul>	

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## Focused Teaching

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.

Support staff, including teachers with specialist expertise in learning, language or development, work collaboratively with class teachers at Meringandan State School to provide focused teaching. Focused teaching is aligned to the PBL Expectations Matrix, and student progress is monitored by the classroom teacher/s to identify those who:

- no longer require the additional support
- require ongoing focussed teaching
- require intensive teaching.

Meringandan State School has a range of Inclusion Team staff in place to help arrange and deliver focused teaching to students who need more support to meet expectations. In addition, the school invests in the following evidence-informed programs to address specific skill development for some students:

- Rock and Water
- Positive Education (through the Bounce Back program)
- Zones of Regulation
- Daniel Morcombe Curriculum
- The Department of Education Respect Program
- Functional Based Assessment.

For more information about these programs, please speak with the Principal.

## Intensive Teaching

Research evidence shows that even in an effective, well-functioning school there will always be approximately 5% of the student population who require intensive teaching to achieve 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.

Students who require intensive teaching will be assigned an individual mentor at the school that will oversee the coordination of their program, communicate with stakeholders and directly consult with the student.

## Disciplinary Consequences

The disciplinary consequences model used at Meringandan State School follows the same differentiated approach used in the proactive teaching and support of student behavioural expectations.

The majority of students will be confident and capable of meeting established expectations that are clear, explicitly taught and practised. In-class corrective feedback, sanctions and rule reminders may be used by teachers to respond to low-level or minor problem behaviours.

Some students will need additional support, time and opportunities to practise expected behaviours. Approximately 15% of the student population may experience difficulty with meeting the stated expectations, and even with focussed teaching, in-class corrective feedback, sanctions and rule reminders continue to display low-level problem behaviour. A continued pattern of low-level behaviour can interfere with teaching and learning for the whole class, and a decision may be needed by the class teacher to refer the student to the school administration team immediately for determination of a disciplinary consequence.

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. This may be needed throughout the school year on a continuous basis. The determination of the need will be made by the principal in consultation with staff and other relevant stakeholders. On occasion the behaviour of a student may be so serious, such as causing harm to other students or to staff, that the principal may determine that an out of school suspension or exclusion is necessary as a consequence for the student's behaviour. Usually this course of action is only taken when the behaviour is either so serious as to warrant immediate removal of the student for the safety of others, and no other alternative discipline strategy is considered sufficient to deal with the problem behaviour.

The differentiated responses to problem behaviour can be organised into three tiers, with increasing intensity of support and consequences to address behaviour that endangers others or causes major, ongoing interference with class or school operations.

### Differentiated

Class teacher provides in-class or in-school disciplinary responses to low-level or minor problem behaviour. This 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
- Classwide 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 (students will be able to eat, and will be released 5 minutes before the end of play)

## Focused

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
- Token economy
- Detention (students will be able to eat, and will be released 5 minutes before the end of play)
- Playtime walk and talk (students will be able to eat, and will be released 5 minutes before the end of play)
- Behavioural contract
- Counselling and guidance support
- Self-monitoring plan
- Check in Check Out strategy
- Teacher coaching and debriefing
- Referral to Student Support Network for team based problem solving
- Stakeholder meeting with parents and external agencies

## Intensive

School leadership team work in consultation with the school team 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.

## Definitions: minor and major behaviors

When responding to problem behaviour the staff member first determines if the problem behaviour is major or minor, with the following agreed understanding:

- **Minor** problem behaviour is handled at the time of the incident by the staff member present
- **Major** problem behaviour is usually referred directly to school administration

**Minor** behaviours are those that:

- are minor breeches of the school values and expectations.
- do not seriously harm others or cause you to suspect that the student may be harmed
- do not violate the rights of others in any other serious way
- are not part of a pattern of problem behaviours
- do not require involvement of specialist support staff or Administration.

**Major behaviours are those that:**

- significantly violate the rights of others
- put others / self at risk of harm
- require the involvement of school administration.

**Major** behaviours result in an immediate referral to Administration because of their seriousness. When major problem behaviour occurs, staff members calmly state the major problem behaviour and remind the student of

expected school behaviour. The staff member contacts the school office and refers the student to Administration advising of the behaviour incident. A student behaviour incident report may be completed by the student/s involved and referred through OneSchool to Admin.

## 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 Meringandan State 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 dangerous 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 Meringandan State School may be invited to attend a re-entry meeting on the day of their scheduled return to school. 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.

It is not mandatory for the student or their parents to attend a re-entry meeting. It may be offered as a support for the student to assist in their successful re-engagement in school following suspension.

### Arrangements

The invitation to attend the re-entry meeting will be communicated via telephone and in writing, usually via email. Re-entry meetings are short,



taking less than 10 minutes, and kept small with only the Principal or their delegate attending with the student and their parent/s.

A record of the meeting is saved in OneSchool, under the Contact tab, including any notes or discussions occurring during the meeting.

### **Structure**

The structure of the re-meeting should follow a set agenda, shared in advance with the student and their family. If additional items are raised for discussion, a separate arrangement should be made to meet with the parent/s at a later date and time. This meeting should be narrowly focussed on making the student and their family feel welcome back into the school community.

Possible agenda:

- Welcome back to school
- Check in on student wellbeing
- Discuss any recent changes to school routine or staffing
- Offer information about supports available (e.g. guidance officer)
- Set a date for follow-up
- Thank student and parent/s for attending
- Walk with student to classroom

### **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

Meringandan State 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 student 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, 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.

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

- illegal items or weapons (e.g. guns, knives\*, throwing stars, brass knuckles, chains)
- imitation guns or weapons
- potentially dangerous items (e.g. blades, rope)
- drugs\*\* (including tobacco)
- alcohol
- aerosol deodorants or cans (including spray paint)
- explosives (e.g. fireworks, flares, sparklers)
- flammable solids or liquids (e.g. fire starters, mothballs, lighters)
- 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 Meringandan State 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 parent or calling the police;
- consent from the student or parent is required 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;
- there may, however, be emergency circumstances where it is necessary to search a student's property without the student's consent or the consent of the student's parents (e.g. to access an EpiPen for an anaphylactic emergency);
- consent from the student or parent is required 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 and the student's parents should be called to make such a determination.

### Parents of students at Meringandan State 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 Meringandan State 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 Meringandan State 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 Meringandan State School 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.

## Use of mobile phones and other devices by students

Meringandan State School requires all students to:

- Keep mobile phones at home, unless there is a safety need.
  - In the case of a safety need, mobile phones will be signed into the office upon arrival to school, and sign out when leaving school. Phones must be switched off.
  - Student devices will be stored securely in the school office. All care but no responsibility will be taken for equipment.
- Keep smart watches and other mobile devices of the similar nature at home, as per the above mobile phone requirements.
- Apply for a formal exemption to this policy if there is a genuine need, for example medical or disability reasons.
  - This exemption will include a usage agreement and agreements regarding usage or damage.

## Preventing and responding to bullying

Meringandan State School uses the [Australian Student Wellbeing 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. Parents who are positively engaged with their child's education leads to improved student self-esteem, attendance and behaviour at school. Enhancing the wellbeing of students and their educators delivers overall long-term social, health and economic benefits to the Australian community.

Meringandan State School has a **Student Council**, with diverse representatives from each year level meeting regularly with the school leadership team to promote strategies to improve student wellbeing, safety and learning outcomes. The standing items on the agenda for each Student Leadership Forum are the core elements of the Australian Student Wellbeing Framework:



### 1. Leadership

Principals and school leaders playing an active role in building a positive learning environment where the whole school community feels included, connected, safe and respected.

### 2. Inclusion

All members of the school community actively participating in building a welcoming school culture that values diversity, and fosters positive, respectful relationships.

### 3. Student voice

Students actively participate in their own learning and wellbeing, feel connected and use their social and emotional skills to be respectful, resilient and safe.

### 4. Partnerships

Families and communities collaborating as partners with the school to support student learning, safety and wellbeing.

### 5. Support

School staff, students and families sharing and cultivating an understanding of wellbeing and positive behaviour and how this supports effective teaching and learning.

A priority for the Student Leadership Forum is contributing to the implementation of strategies that enhance wellbeing, promote safety and counter violence, bullying and abuse in all online and physical spaces. The engagement of young people in the design of technology information and digital education programs for parents was a key recommendation from the [Queensland Anti-Cyberbullying Taskforce report](#) in 2018, and at Meringandan State School we believe students should be at the forefront of advising staff, parents and the broader community about emerging issues and practical solutions suitable to different contexts.

## Bullying

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.

However, these conflicts are still considered serious and need to be addressed and resolved. At Meringandan State School our staff will work to quickly respond to any matters raised of this nature in collaboration with students and parents.

The following flowchart explains the actions Meringandan State School teachers will take when they receive a report about student bullying, including bullying which may have occurred online or outside of the school setting. Please note that the indicative timeframes will vary depending on the professional judgment of teachers who receive the bullying complaint and their assessment of immediate risk to student/s.

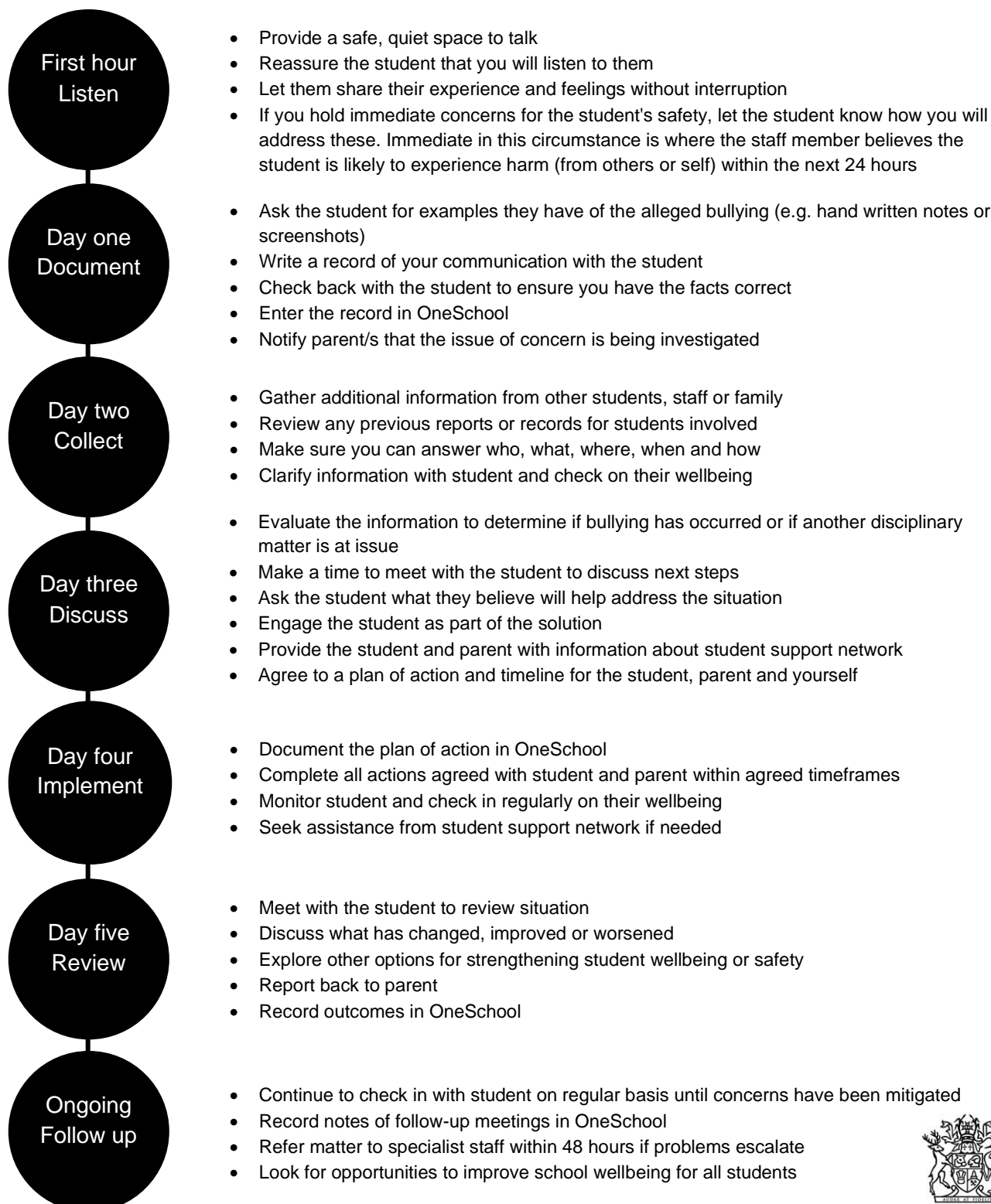
## Meringandan State School - Bullying response flowchart for teachers

Please note these timelines may be adjusted depending on the unique circumstances and risk associated with each situation. This is at the professional judgment of the staff involved. Timeframes should be clearly discussed and agreed with student and family.

### Key contacts for students and parents to report bullying:

Prep to Year 6 – Class teacher

School Principal



## Cyberbullying

Cyberbullying is treated at Meringandan State School with the same level of seriousness as in-person bullying. The major difference with cyberbullying however, is that unlike in-person bullying, 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 the regular class teacher (for students in primary year levels).

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 Meringandan State School may face in-school disciplinary action, such as detention or removing 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 towards students, staff or other parents may be referred to the Office of the e-Safety Commissioner and/or the Queensland Police Service. State school staff will be referred for investigation to the Integrity and Employee Relations team in the Department of Education.



# Meringandan State School - Cyberbullying response flowchart for school staff

## How to manage online incidents that impact your school

### Student protection

If at any point the principal forms a reasonable suspicion that a student has been harmed or is at risk of harm, they have a responsibility to respond in accordance with the [Student protection procedure](#).

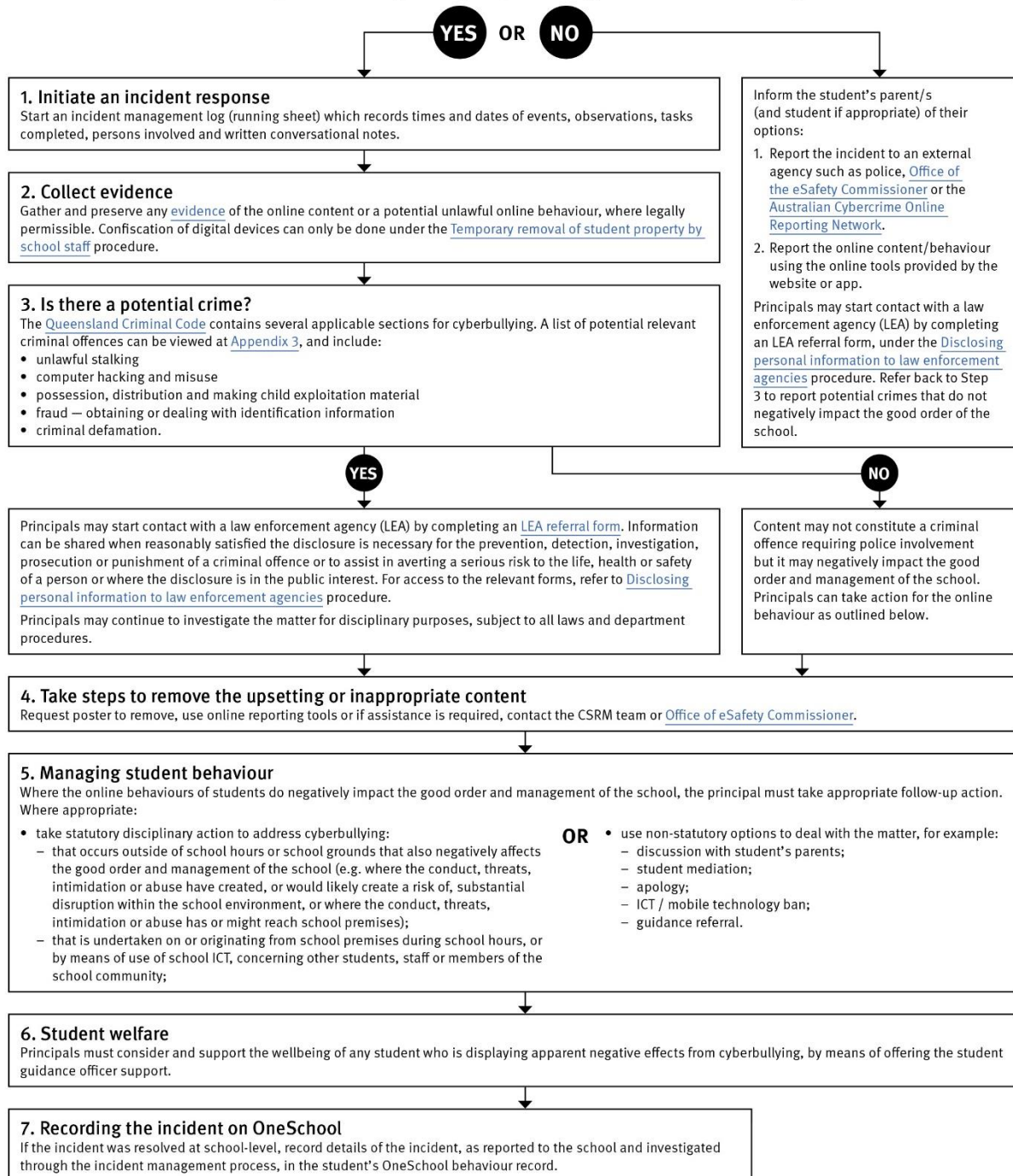
### Explicit images

If the investigation involves naked or explicit images of children, staff should not save, copy, forward or otherwise deal with the content, as per the [Temporary removal of student property by school staff procedure](#). This includes onto OneSchool records. Refer to the investigative process outlined in 'Responding to incidents involving naked or explicit images of children' from the [Online Incident management guidelines](#).

### Report

Refer to the [Online incident management guidelines](#) for more details, or if assistance is required, contact the Cybersecurity and Reputation Management (CSRM) team on 3034 5035 or [Cybersafety.ReputationManagement@qed.qld.gov.au](mailto:Cybersafety.ReputationManagement@qed.qld.gov.au).

Does the online behaviour/incident negatively impact the good order and management of the school?



## Cybersafety and Reputation Management (CRM)

The Department of Education employs a dedicated team of experts to assist in maintaining the integrity of the department's reputation with regards to cybersafety and reputation management issues, effectively leading the development and implementation of departmental cybersafety processes.

This team provides **direct support for schools** to respond to concerns of inappropriate online behaviour and misuse of information and communication technology.

The team provides a [guide for parents](#) with important information about cybersafety and cyberbullying, and suggestions about what you can do if your child is a target or responsible for inappropriate online behaviour.

The team has also developed a [Cyberbullying and reputation management](#) (Department employees only) resource to assist principals in incident management.

For more information about cybersafety sessions at your school, or for assistance with issues relating to online behaviour, contact the [team](#) (Department employees only).

### Student Intervention and Support Services

Meringandan State School recognises the need to provide intervention and support to all students involved in incidents of bullying, including cyberbullying.

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 Meringandan State 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 withdrawal from social events or celebrations or more severe punishments such as suspension or exclusion from school.

## **Meringandan State School – Anti-Bullying Compact**

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

### **Meringandan State School – Anti Bullying Compact**

We agree to work together to improve the quality of relationships in our community at Meringandan State 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's signature

Parent's signature

School representative signature

Date

## Appropriate use of social media

The internet, mobile phones and social media provide wonderful opportunities for 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.

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.
- A few years ago parents may have discussed concerns or issues with their friends at the school gate. Today with the use of social media, online discussions between you and your close friends can very quickly be shared with a much wider audience, potentially far larger than intended.
- 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.

While many schools use social media to update parents of school notices, the department prefers that parents contact schools directly with a compliment, complaint or enquiry due to privacy considerations. Imagine if your doctor, accountant or banking institution tried to contact you to discuss important matters via Facebook.

If you have raised an issue with a school or know that another person has, consider refraining from discussing those details on social media, particularly the names of anyone involved.

Keep comments calm and polite, just as you would over the telephone or by email. If you encounter negative or derogatory content online which involves the school, hinders a child's learning and/or affects the school community at large, contact the school principal.

### **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* (Cwth) 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).

### **What about other people's privacy?**

If you upload photos of your children, be mindful of who might be in the background. You might be happy to share your child's successes with your friends and family via social media, but some parents are not. If you are tagging or naming students, consider that other parents may not want their child's name attached to images online.

### **What if I encounter problem content?**

Taking the following steps may help resolve the issue in a constructive way:

- refrain from responding
- take a screen capture or print a copy of the concerning online content
- if you consider problem content to be explicit, pornographic or exploitative of minors, you should keep a record of the URL of the page containing that content but NOT print or share it. The URL can be provided to the school principal, or police, as needed for escalation of serious concerns
- block the offending user
- report the content to the social media provider.

## Restrictive Practices

School staff at Meringandan State 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 practices 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