Student Welfare
Anti-Bullying Policy

Bullying:
Bullying can be defined as intentional, repeated behaviour by an individual or group of individuals that causes distress, hurt or undue pressure. This can occur in person, via others or through cyber-bullying.

For example, bullying occurs when a person:
- is threatened
- stalked or given dirty looks
- is called names (to their face or via the Internet)
- is put down or teased in an unkind way
- has property hidden, damaged, stolen or destroyed
- is physically hurt
- sent hurtful notes or online messages
- is singled out for treatment or left out
- is picked on or ridiculed
- has rumours spread about him or her
- is excluded on purpose by a group and the exclusion has been led by a particular student.

Bullies:
At times, students may face disciplinary procedures after exhibiting one of the above behaviours. In the first two instances, their behaviour will be recorded in the school’s ‘Anti-Bullying Register’.

Students whose names appear within the register 3 times within a year will be recognised as displaying bullying behaviour and will receive a Red Slip.

Red Slips will be issued for subsequent behaviours such as those listed in this policy.

Bullies are defined, for the purpose of this policy and in accord with the school’s Discipline Policy, as students who bully a child 3 or more times, or students who bully 3 or more children within a year.

Student Support and Welfare

If someone is bullied...
- he/she may be confused and not know what to do
- he/she may feel sad, frightened, unsafe, sick, embarrassed, angry, unfairly treated, may be withdrawn or not wanting to attend school
- it can affect their school work and it can affect their family and friends.

At Merimbula Public School we support students by:
- encouraging them to employ strategies taught during Health/Personal Development sessions
- creating positive classroom environments
- implementing classroom-based Personal Development Programs such as the Child Protection and Life Education Programs
- having an active Stage 1-Stage 3 Student Representative Council and holding class meetings
- developing positive Student Leadership roles
- by having an active Learning Support Team
- being involved in our school and wider community
- encouraging parents to take an active role in school programs
- by having in-school anti-bullying mediation meetings
- investigating events or accusations thoroughly
Continued...

- having prompt parental communication
- actively listening to students
- being observant of signs of distress or suspected cases of teasing, exclusion or bullying
- reporting incidents of bullying
- reporting bullying to the Student Welfare Manager and Learning Support Team.

You do not have to put up with being bullied...
Initially, when students disclose that they feel they have been bullied we:

1. **Investigate the alleged bullying. We do this by:**
   - questioning the alleged victim
   - questioning the alleged bully(ies)
   - questioning any witnesses, or those who were in the direct area / situation
   - holding formal, separate interviews with alleged: victims, bullies, witnesses
   - accessing evidence (eg: written / Internet notes)
   - documenting follow-up
   - meeting with parents and caregivers
   - holding mediation meetings
   - making resolution plans
   - implementing the school’s Discipline Policy where necessary.

2. **Ask students to use a range of self-assertiveness strategies. These include:**
   - ignore the potential bully and walk away
   - ask a friend to stay with you
   - tell the person to "leave me alone"
   - first tell the person nicely, and then strongly
   - ask "why are you doing this?"
   - tell the teacher on duty
   - walk near the teacher, sit near a bus driver / adult
   - tell your class teacher or a support teacher
   - tell the principal
   - tell mum and dad, or other caregivers (eg: after school care / sporting team supervisors)
   - keep telling.

**Students YOU can help what happens by...**

- following anti-bullying strategies taught at school
- telling on others who you observe bullying
- being honest and truthful at all times
- respecting the rights, views and property of others
- caring for the environment and striving to improve it.

**Parents YOU can help what happens by...**

- being aware of this policy and what bullying is
- watching for signs of distress in your child
- listening to your child
- discussing anti-bullying strategies with your child
- advising your child to tell a staff member
- informing your child’s class teacher of suspected bullying
- working with the school to solve bullying issues.

**The school will...**

- follow the alleged bullying investigation procedures, ensuring consistency and fairness
- talk to alleged bully(ies)
- place names of those exhibiting bullying behaviour in the Anti-Bullying Register
- monitor the register regularly
- contact parents / caregivers of bullying victims and of the bully(ies)
- follow the school’s Discipline Policy
- take privileges away in accord with the school’s Discipline Policy
- if necessary give the students a ‘time-out’, place the student on a Behaviour Monitoring Program or suspend the student in accord with the school’s Discipline Policy
- where necessary contact the Department’s Security and Response Directorate or the Police.

For further information about any of the school’s Student Welfare initiatives, please contact:
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