



# Merewether High School

## *Student Discipline Policy*

### **School Vision**

Merewether High School is an inspirational model of public education. We challenge our gifted and talented students to engage with a vigorous and collaborative understanding of lifelong learning. Students are supported to achieve excellence in all aspects of school life. Our school community motivates students to become conscientious and responsible citizens within the local and broader communities. Our school is a supportive learning environment where the individual talents of each student are nurtured and students are encouraged to reach their potential while maintaining balance and a positive attitude. Merewether High School has a culture that is conducive to productivity, with superior resources, technology and staff.

### **School Context**

Merewether High School is an academically selective high school with 88 staff, catering for 1080 students from a wide geographical area within the Hunter Central Coast Region. The school offers a broad, balanced and relevant curriculum focusing on high expectations of student academic achievement. Merewether High School is committed to developing the whole student through academic, sporting and cultural endeavours. Students are encouraged to participate in leadership, creative and performing arts programs and sporting pursuits along with a range of extra-curricular activities as well as their academic studies. The school has high expectations of all students, consistent with each student's ability and the belief that all students can achieve their personal best. Our experienced staff supports the needs of our academically gifted and talented students. A significant feature of the school is that it is a caring community, committed to excellence, diversity and fostering individual talents. The development of technology is ongoing with continued access to applications that enhance teaching and learning. The school has an active parent body that supports the school through a variety of programs. Merewether High School has established a number of important links with the community to strengthen student outcomes by supporting student academic and welfare development. The school community has embedded the three core values of Merewether High school as integrity, diversity and excellence.

### **Gifted and Talented – Curriculum Model**

Merewether High School seeks to provide a learning environment that both challenges and supports gifted students to pursue excellence and develop a lifelong passion for learning and prepare them for responsible leadership and service to society. Our vision is to provide both national and global leadership in the education of the gifted.

In supporting good discipline in public schools, Merewether High School has as its foundation the core values of Integrity, Excellence, Respect, Responsibility, Cooperation, Participation, Care, Fairness and Democracy.

## **Fair Discipline Code**

All students and staff of Merewether High School have the right to learn and teach in a safe, ordered and disciplined environment in which effective learning can take place

- Students are expected to behave in a manner that brings credit upon themselves, their families and their school.
- The school, students and their families and carers have the joint responsibility to ensure acceptable standards of behaviour and a positive learning environment.
- Students will be encouraged to develop self-discipline by accepting responsibility for their own behaviour.
- The School will use a range of strategies to reward achievement and prevent unacceptable behaviour.
- Unacceptable behaviour will be discouraged by consequences that are understood by all students.

### **1. Merewether High School implements discipline procedures in line with the Core Rules for Students in NSW government Schools**

All students are expected to:

- Attend every school day, unless they are legally excused, and be in class on time and prepared to learn.
- Maintain a neat appearance, including adhering to the requirements of the school's uniform and dress code policy.
- Behave safely, considerately and responsibly, including when travelling to and from school.
- Show respect at all times for teachers, other school staff and helpers, including following class rules, speaking courteously, cooperating with instructions, and learning activities.
- Treat one another with dignity and respect.
- Care for property belonging to themselves, the school and others.

Behaviour that infringes on the safety of others, such as harassment, bullying and illegal or anti-social behaviour of any kind, will not be tolerated.

The core rules have been translated into the NSW Behaviour Code for students, which all students of Merewether High School are expected to follow. (Appendix A)

### **2. Strategies and Practices to promote positive behaviour, including specific strategies to maintain a climate of respect.**

Merewether High School recognises that rewarding good behaviour encourages students to act responsibly and develop self discipline. Students have a greater desire to take pride in their school and behave in an acceptable manner. The importance of reward rather than punishment is highly regarded.

Student Wellbeing encompasses everything that the school community does to meet the personal and social needs of the students. The school's wellbeing framework is structured to support students to connect, succeed and thrive (Appendix B). Student wellbeing is the responsibility of all staff. It involves:

- Fostering attitudes which value and respect individuality, diversity, and reject all forms of prejudice.
- Fostering attitudes which value Australia's heritage and unique culture.
- Fostering adherence to the principles of democracy, freedom of expression, equality of opportunity and social justice.

- Providing significant opportunities for student led groups and student voice eg: social justice group
- Encouraging and recognising personal and group effort and achievement.
- Encouraging creativity, imagination and intellectual curiosity.
- Encouraging a commitment to learning as a life-long process.
- Maintaining an educational culture in which all strive to achieve high standards.
- Encouraging friendship, co-operation, communication, individual and social responsibility.
- Fostering care of and support for others.
- Encouraging a sense of self-worth.

### **3. Strategies and practices to recognise and reinforce student achievement:**

The school implements a comprehensive recognition and reward scheme inclusive of a wide variety of holistic programs such as Leadership passports, academic and merit awards, bronze awards, volunteer and community service initiatives, RoSA awards and Principal Recognition Letters. (Appendix C)

### **4. Strategies and practices to manage inappropriate student behaviour:**

Inappropriate behaviours that are in conflict with our core rules will result in consistently applied consequences. The school community is aware of the need for consistency and the acceptance of responsibility and accountability for the implementation of the school values, integrity, diversity and excellence.

#### **Parent Responsibilities**

Parents and careers should work in partnership with the school by:

- Encouraging achievement
- Ensuring consistent attendance
- Supporting the school's teaching and student welfare programs
- Communicating reasons for absences and other matters that affect student performance
- Working with the school to promote self-discipline and respect for the rights of others
- Participating in decision making processes

#### **Student Responsibilities**

Students have a responsibility to:

- Attend school regularly, arrive on time, and present notes to explain absences from school and class
- Obey the school discipline code and accept school discipline
- Follow the instructions of teachers and those in authority
- Be prepared for lessons with appropriate books, equipment, special clothing and footwear
- Complete all required work to the best of their ability
- Encourage others to do their best
- Show respect for themselves and for the rights and feelings of others, before, during and after school and while representing the school
- Respect and care for school buildings, school property and the property of others
- Observe the general dress standards and uniform requirements of the school
- Work to solve problems without violence and intimidation
- Treat the entire school community with respect
- Accept differences in others

- Behave in a safe manner at all times

Staff follow the schools discipline policy aligned with the Australian professional teaching standards:

- Establish and implement inclusive and positive interactions to engage and support all students in classroom activities (APTS 4.1.2)
- Establish and maintain orderly and workable routines to create an environment where student time is spent on learning tasks (APTS 4.2.3)
- Manage challenging behaviour by establishing and negotiating clear expectations with students and address discipline issues promptly, fairly and respectfully (APTS 4.3.2)
- Ensure students' wellbeing and safety within school by implementing school and/ or system, curriculum and legislative requirements (APTS 4.4.2)

Processes that facilitate this:

All faculties have a consistent approach to student management and follow school procedures.

### **Teachers**

- Classroom teachers manage student behaviour in the classroom, during school sport and in the playground in accordance with their teaching roles and responsibilities.
- Teachers use a range of professional strategies to modify student behaviour.
- Teachers follow up student management concerns with appropriate consequences.
- Teachers record student behaviour concerns in SENTRAL Wellbeing detailing a factual account of the incident and the action taken by the teacher. (Appendix D)
- Teachers notify the students' parents where student behaviour has required additional management.

When student management matters need to be taken beyond the classroom, the staff member:

- Completes a SENTRAL notification, including teacher action taken and a phone call to the parent of the student concerned.
- Tick the referral to HT box in SENTRAL and discuss this referral with the Head Teacher including the outline of procedures they have already undertaken.

The SENTRAL Notification is a record of the incident and action, and is not the management strategy in itself.

### **Head Teacher**

When no further action is required, the Head Teacher:

- Notes the behaviour, and completes the entry data in SENTRAL under the referred notification.

Where further action is required the Head Teacher:

- Undertakes further investigation.
- May apply a variety of consequences or sanctions
- Enters data in SENTRAL.
- Makes further contact with the student's parent or care giver.

- May make a referral to the School Learning and Support Team for additional support via the Head Teacher & Learning at the next executive meeting using the attached referral form. (Appendix E and F)

**OR**

- In serious cases a referral to the relevant Deputy Principal via discussion with necessary supporting documentation.

**The Head Teacher action is then updated in SENTAL so as a detailed record of action taken at all levels is available to the Deputy Principal.**

**Deputy Principal**

- When students appear to be at risk across a number of areas, the Deputy Principal may choose strategies including, referral to Counsellor, review of learning plans or parent contact.
- Enters data in SENTRAL as appropriate.
- In serious matters, further investigations may be carried out, in order to impose the most appropriate sanction. This may include:
  - Student counsel
  - Consequence eg. Executive Detention
  - Parent interview
  - Referral -additional support agencies
  - Pre-suspension warning letter
  - Recommendation to Principal for suspension
  - Reprimand
  - Remediation
  - Loss of privileges
  - Restitution
  - Peer mediation and conflict resolution processes
  - Behaviour monitoring.

Prior to the School Learning Support Team meeting each fortnight, a printout of commendation and referrals recorded on SENTAL to be generated, for referral and review of individual students where appropriate.

**Principal**

- Is responsible for the development, implementation and monitoring of the school's discipline policy
- Is responsible for ensuring the school's policy is evaluated and reviewed by the school community every three years
- Ensure that all disciplinary actions involving suspension or expulsion from school are consistent with the Suspension and Expulsion of School Students Procedures.

Merewether High School implements the Department of Education Policy for Student Discipline in Government Schools. The policy document can be found at:

<https://education.nsw.gov.au/policy-library/policies/student-discipline-in-government-schools-policy>