Rationale

Student Welfare and Discipline are critical to the teaching and learning process and the harmonious functioning of the school.

Legally, teachers have a Duty of Care to their students which requires them to make decisions and implement strategies which protect children from harm. This principle underpins every act which is undertaken by all staff at the school.

It is recognised that parents have responsibilities in this regard as well. It is the responsibility of parents to teach and reinforce acceptable standards of behaviour to their children and to support the school in its endeavours in this regard. Behavioural expectations at Yass Public School reflect the school community's shared values of RESPECT, RESPONSIBILITY and PARTICIPATION.

Educationally, the Student Welfare and Discipline Policy is fundamental to the teaching and learning activities of the school. It is recognised that every student has the right to be safe and secure at school, both in physical and psychological terms. It is understood that if students are to grow into healthy, capable and independent adults who treat others with respect and consideration, they must experience it themselves in their childhood.

If students are to take risks with their learning, to learn to love learning and to be capable of giving of their best, they need to be in a safe and supportive environment. This is the environment which staff at Yass Public School strive to provide and maintain.

Desired Outcomes:

- Students will adhere to the values of respect, responsibility and participation to guide their actions.
- Students will develop a sense of personal dignity and worth.
- Students will develop a caring attitude towards others and a sense of belonging to a wider community.
- Students will develop self-reliance.
- Students will develop tolerance and respect for others, especially those who have different capabilities or those from different backgrounds.
- Students will enjoy participating in a range of school activities, demonstrating skills of co-operation and leadership where appropriate.
School Rules

At Yass Public School we value respect, responsibility and participation and positive behaviour expectations based on these values are taught to students.

Some of these expectations are:

RESPECT
- Speak and act politely towards students, staff and visitors.
- Follow teachers’ directions.
- Keep hands and feet to yourself.

RESPONSIBILITY
- Look after your own and school property.
- Keep the school clean.
- Play fairly.
- Stay in bounds.

PARTICIPATION
- Do your personal best at all times.
- Wear school uniform.
- Move safely and sensibly around the school.
- Come to school prepared for work.

Implementation

Student welfare is the responsibility of each member of staff. Each member of staff is expected to act with the highest degree of probity and fairness in all dealings with students, especially in situations which may require disciplining students. Care will be taken that a complete set of circumstances regarding students’ actions is ascertained and that decisions are made in a professional manner.

At the beginning of a school year class teachers will negotiate specific class rules that reflect the values of respect, responsibility and participation. These rules will be displayed in the classroom and the related expectations will be explicitly taught to the class and positive consequences will reinforce expected behaviours. A Step System, giving consistent consequences for inappropriate behaviours, is used in each class. Step 1 is a Warning and Step 5 results in the student being sent to the Principal who then contacts the student’s parents.

Teachers aim for the highest possible quality of communication with their students. Communication should be:
- a two-way process
- marked by respect on both sides
- characterised by effective listening
- infused with tolerance and humour and
- a positive experience for all participants.
Teachers will conduct classes in a manner which encourages all to participate, all to experience success and all who require it to obtain support and assistance. Students will be encouraged to develop their individual interests and abilities.

Parents will be informed of a student’s behaviour when it becomes part of a discernible pattern or if the behaviour is serious. The class teacher will document such occurrences and may request an interview with parents or ask the Principal or Executive to do so. Such communication with parents will focus on redirecting behaviour and resolving the problem. The aim is to enable home and school to work together to resolve the difficulty with the student’s behaviour.

Where appropriate, other agencies will be used in an attempt to resolve unacceptable student behaviour. This may include the intervention of the Assistant Principal Learning Assistance or Community Health Services. Where necessary, the School Counsellor or District Guidance Officer will be involved.

Teachers will supervise the playgrounds keeping student safety paramount as well as promoting and rewarding, with Positive Behaviour for Success (PBS) tickets, appropriate student behaviours.

Discipline will be fair and consistent. Sanctions will match the severity of the misbehaviour and instruction and counselling will form part of the response. Sanctions will be handled with sensitivity and with due regard to the student’s self esteem.

Students will be given opportunities to make decisions and to accept responsibility through class programs, the school leadership program and the Student Representative Council (SRC). Success will be noted and acknowledged in an appropriate manner.

In the case of severe misbehaviour, the following steps will be taken:

1. In long term or intractable cases, the services of District personnel will be called on. The student may be placed on a Behaviour Modification Program after discussion and consultation with teacher/s, Principal, School Counsellor and the student’s parents.

2. The student may be counselled and cautioned by the teacher involved and a playground exclusion may be imposed.

3. If warranted, this process may be replaced or repeated by the Principal or a member of the executive. The student will be instructed as to why the behaviour is unacceptable and how to behave in future or similar situations. An exclusion from the playground (Detention) may be imposed. A detention note will be sent home to parents indicating the reason/s for the detention and requesting parents to sign and return the note to the school.

4. If the misbehaviour is sustained or of a serious nature which threatens the welfare of student/s or staff, a short suspension or long suspension may be imposed as per DET policy. A meeting between the parents and the Principal will take place. The School Education Director (SED) will be informed of long suspensions and a pattern of short suspensions.
5. Following a suspension a resolution of suspension meeting will take place between the parents and Principal and relevant support people. The aim of the resolution meeting is to seek means and resources to assist the student to modify his or her behaviour. A resolution meeting is required before a student returns from suspension.

6. If the situation remains unresolved by suspensions and support strategies steps may be taken to exclude the student from the school and provisions made for the student to continue his or her education at another school or in an alternative educational setting.

**Violence**

In the case of a student engaging in or threatening an act of violence towards other students or members of staff the student will be removed from the classroom or playground; his or her parents will be contacted and action will be taken by way of counselling and a suspension will be imposed.

**Drugs**

Students who bring to school an illegal or prohibited substance will be subject to police interview after their parents have been informed. A suspension will be imposed.

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**Playground Committee**

The Playground Committee will monitor students’ behaviour in the playground by way of reports of incidents recorded in the Playground Record books which are used by teachers when on playground duty. Teachers record the date, incident, location and names of students involved when issues come to their attention. A record of any disciplinary action is also taken. The Positive Behaviour for Success (PBS) team monitors data collected to ascertain actions required if patterns of behaviour emerge.

The Playground Committee meets weekly with students whose behaviour has led to an entry in the Playground Folder. In the first instance, the incident is discussed in detail to ascertain the facts of the matter and the student’s involvement. The student is encouraged to be honest and frank with the committee and to accept responsibility for his or her behaviour. The consequences of the behaviour for students and others are discussed and more appropriate ways of dealing with the situation are developed. Sanctions are imposed or student actions are praised as appropriate. The student may be required to attend a review meeting in the following week where the behaviour pattern will be revisited and feedback on behaviour can be given. The committee looks for signs of growth and development in students and will positively encourage this.
Bullying

Consistent with the aim of providing a safe and harmonious environment, bullying in all its forms cannot be regarded as an acceptable practice at Yass Public School. Staff and parents understand the damage that bullying can cause to students and the deleterious effects it can have on students’ outcomes.

Definition

Bullying is any deliberate gratuitous action which causes feelings of distress, harassment or fear on the part of another person. It can be:

- Verbal (name calling; using demeaning terms or threats). Unwarranted exclusion from social groups.
- Physical (violence against the person or their property)
- A mixture of both.

Bullying is usually a series of events rather than an isolated incident. It may involve one or a number of victims.

Affects of Bullying

Bullying has various negative effects on the victim. It can lead to feelings of worthlessness, loss of confidence in many domains, can dramatically alter social contacts and interactions at school and lead to school avoidance and feelings of isolation. Bullying can significantly lower learning outcomes for victims.

Bullying has deleterious effects on the perpetrator as well. Bullies can develop a skewed range of values which may impede their personal development. They may never develop the social skills which allow for close and fulfilling relationships.

Plan for Dealing with Bullying at Yass Public School

1. Staff and parents realise and acknowledge that bullying may occur and that it is **not to be tolerated**.
2. The student body will be given explicit instruction, appropriate to their development, as to how to handle bullying situations. This will emphasise that:
   i) students **do not** have to accept the situation and
   ii) students **must** tell a teacher or their parents if the situation becomes a problem for them.
3. Parents of both parties in the situation will be advised of any incidents as well as what the school has done to manage the situation and how the school can support their children in the future.
4. All students will be given social skills lessons specifically on rights and responsibilities, assertiveness and negotiation skills. These will be provided through Child Protection lessons and PE/Health/PD lessons.
5. Students specifically involved will be targeted for additional assistance by school staff or the School Counsellor.
6. Staff deal with issues of bullying in the school as they arise. The Playground Committee will be made aware of emergent patterns from recordings of student behaviour in the playground and will take appropriate action.

7. Staff will address issues involving bullying promptly and in a manner consistent with the policy. Staff will be kept informed of issues involving bullies as part of staff meetings.