

# Merimbula Public School

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## Teachers' Children at School Procedures

### RATIONALE:

It is very pleasing that teachers employed at Merimbula Public School wish to enrol their own children at the school. This is not only because of reasons of convenience; it is also an indicator of the confidence teachers have in the school and their teaching colleagues. However, it is important to acknowledge that at times, conflicts of interest may occur, or be seen to occur. We need to be mindful that school processes and practices do not allow for favouritism or discrimination; and do not put pressure on staff by creating perceived or real conflicts of interest. This policy refers to teachers' children at school and extends to immediate family and relatives associated with staff members.

It also must be recognised that teaching a colleague's child can be challenging, both for the class teacher and the teacher-parent. Balancing roles and relationships is the responsibility of all involved. This policy endeavours to set in place procedures and expectations that will positively support all involved. It also seeks to provide the school community with information of how possible conflicts of interests are managed.

### OUT OF AREA ENROLMENTS:

Teachers with school-age children residing within the school catchment boundary, at the time of enrolment, are naturally entitled to enrol their child at Merimbula Public School. Staff living outside the school's catchment boundary must make an out-of-area enrolment application citing exceptional circumstances as per the enrolment policy, to be reviewed by the school's enrolment committee.

### CLASS PLACEMENT:

- Teachers' children are to be placed in classes according to the school '*Class Formation Procedures*'. Consideration for placement for educational benefit can be made by any parent and are to be made in writing to the Principal.
- A teacher with responsibility for forming classes, or having an input to the process, should declare a conflict of interest. Class placement of all children will be reviewed by the Assistant Principals and Principal.
- Where feasible, consideration will be given to stage leaders/assistant principals leading a stage within which their child is in.
- For staffing reasons, it may be necessary for an assistant principal to lead their child's stage cohort. In these circumstances, attention will be given to avoid an assistant principal not only teaching their child's class, but also addressing staffing, educational, resourcing and discipline matters directly involving their child or child's friends/friendship group.

### AWARDS/RECOGNITION/SELECTION:

This area demands a highly ethical approach, and no preference should be shown. Each and every student at the school should enjoy equal opportunity. Overt or covert pressure should not be employed for the gain of a particular student. Matters of this kind will be managed by the Principal referencing the NSW Department of Education *Code of Conduct*.

### EXPECTATIONS:

A teacher's child should receive equal treatment and have the same expectations and privileges as every other child in the school. No preferential treatment or discrimination should be evident or requested. A teacher/parent should use existing school processes to access various programs and make requests. Class teachers should feel confident to inform a teacher/parent that additional learning support is necessary or if there is an issue in the class. The Merimbula Public School *Student Wellbeing* and *Discipline Policy* provides the framework for managing all matters related to behaviour and consequences for all children, including teacher's children enrolled at the school.

It is also imperative that a student be given the opportunity to be 'their own person' at school i.e. their daily trials, tribulations and successes are not necessarily reported routinely by teacher to teacher. Teachers and teacher/parents should discuss any concerns in a professional manner, with the support of an executive member of staff if needed.

Some basic guidelines (can be varied following discussion with the Principal):

- Children of staff members should not enter administration areas (e.g. staffroom, administration offices, staff administration block areas, staff toilets) at any time on school days, unless a privilege is extended to all students. The staffroom is considered a student-free space for faculty activities and all students are generally not allowed to enter at any time.
- Children of staff members should be on the playground during break times and follow the same rules as all students.
- Children of staff members have permission to be in the teacher-parent's classroom before school and after school, if supervised by the parent, so that the teacher-parent can complete lesson preparation and teaching-related activities. The school accepts no liability for accidents or injuries if children are onsite outside school hours under the care and supervision of their parent.

- Children of staff members should not have special access to school facilities or equipment.
- Children of staff members should not be present during discussions about students, families or confidential school matters between staff; or during parent-teacher meetings. This also includes phone discussion both on and off-site.
- Children of staff members should be appropriately supervised when teachers are required to attend professional learning or routine staff or team meetings. This may include enrolment in BASC or through consent from the principal or executive staff in the Principal's absence, for alternative arrangements. These arrangements should be initiated by the staff member annually and confirmed at the start of each year or commencement of entry on duty at the school.
- At times, teachers may be requested to attend sporadic or unscheduled meetings in the course of their work. When these occur, accommodations should be made for the children of teachers to stay on the school site in a safe environment for the teacher-parent to attend these irregular meetings.

#### **SOCIAL ENGAGEMENT:**

One of the greatest challenges for teachers whose children attend the school is social engagement with parents and students outside the school setting. It is an important part of a child's social development that they freely engage with others, attend birthday parties and participate in community activities etc. The teacher-parent needs to be mindful that their opinion regarding school matters within the community needs to be maintained at the highest professional level. Social media must be managed in such a manner as to not contravene this policy or the *Code of Conduct*. Matters of confidentiality need to be given serious consideration in all interactions.

#### **CONFLICTS OF INTEREST:**

Conflicts of interest refer to situations where conflict arises between public duty and private interest. It is the responsibility of class teachers and members of the executive to recognise and acknowledge any events, programs or selections (sport, cultural or academic) that may generate a potential conflict of interest, either perceived or real for the teacher-parent. It is a generally accepted procedure that once a conflict of interest is apparent, the teacher-parent will step aside for the selection process and an alternate adjudicator be invited to preside.

#### **EVALUATION:**

This policy will be evaluated annually in consultation with staff, students, the P&C and school community.

*Implemented: June 23, 2025.*



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