



ST PETER'S CATHOLIC PARISH PRIMARY SCHOOL

Student Wellbeing Policy **Incorporating Pastoral Care and Student Management**

Perspective:

" I have come that you may have life and have it to the full "(John 10:10)

Pastoral care is an expression of our philosophy and vision demanding a whole school approach. It integrates the academic, social and religious dimensions to provide a strong sense of wellbeing, belonging and security. It allows all people to feel affirmed and nurtured in their growth.

Statements of Common Belief:

- We are driven by the power of God's love to develop in every member of the school community life enhancing relationships and connectedness.
- It is our responsibility to have a holistic approach to behaviour management focussing on the development of empathy, self-discipline and resilience.
- All members of the community have the right to a secure environment that promotes their physical, emotional, intellectual, social and spiritual development.
- Programs within our school address the life needs of our members allowing them to have a positive self-regard, a feeling of acceptance and a sense of well being.
- Our school works in partnership with teachers, parents, students, parish and the wider community to establish a positive environment which fosters trust and provides support for the growth and development of our members.

Pastoral Care - Developing a positive school climate

At St Peter's we are committed to encouraging each person in our community to have a sense of connectedness. We acknowledge that people work and interact more effectively if they are happy, secure and stimulated.

Children are given opportunities to develop skills which promote resilience, problem solving, and the ability to make good choices. We encourage empathy towards the feelings of others and respect for the rights of all.

As teachers we see our role as being both managers and educators of children's behaviour. Strategies are employed to educate children about how to manage difficult situations.

We acknowledge the different stages of development of the children in our care. Young children require immediate, short term consequences. With older children it is often more effective to allow time to cool down and consider options.

Pastoral Care is therefore addressed in the following levels of activity:



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Prevention - promoting health and building belonging.

Early Intervention - strengthening coping and reducing risk.

Intervention - accessing support and providing treatment.

Recovery - restoring positive relationships.

Serious offences

A serious offence is a behaviour which deliberately undermines the ethos of a catholic school. It is by nature a criminal offence and is described in detail in "Pastoral Care of Students in Catholic Schools", a publication by Catholic Education Commission of Victoria.

Consequences for such actions are determined by the principal.

Corporal Punishment is not permitted

Bullying

In creating a positive and supportive school climate bullying is not tolerated.

At St. Peter's we define bullying behaviour as being an intentional repeated action which hurts, threatens or frightens someone. It is an illegitimate use of power and can be either an individual or group action. It may be manifested in the following ways:

Verbal - humiliation put downs, name calling, threatening.

Physical - hitting, kicking, punching, throwing, stealing.

Social - rumours, embarrassment, ignoring and ostracising.

Psychological - dirty looks, body language, damaging property, mean jokes

If bullying occurs, teachers respond with appropriate early interventional / interventional consequences.

Implementation:

Prevention:

- welcoming transition process
 - parent participation
 - sun smart program
 - sports and swimming program
 - open and safe playground
 - extra teacher supervision
 - children's participation in school community life eg:senior leadership positions, choir, and camp.
 - Recognition of positive behaviour eg. Stickers, points, stars, raffle tickets, awards, private and public acknowledgement, rewards, treats.
 - Bounceback resilience program
 - Positive Behaviour Support - School wide expectations
- S**how respect
Think positively
Act responsibility
Remember to persist and Bounceback



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- Staff modelling respect and dignity
- Collaboratively developed policies.
- Teaching games
- Parenting programs
- Sporting equipment and adventure playground
- Reminders

Early Intervention:

- Open communication between parents, teachers and children
- Pre-assessments
- Personalised learning plans
- Program support group meetings
- Professional learning Teams - Prep, Junior, Middle, Senior
- Reading Recovery
- Reminders and warnings
- Communication with parents
- Professional reading and inservices
- Teaching social skills

Intervention:

- Time release for teachers to address special needs
- Referrals to specialists eg. Speech therapists, psychologists, occupational therapists, CEO personnel, community agencies
- Mediation between concerned participants
- Meetings with parents
- Seasons program
- Behaviour management plans
- Behaviour contracts
- Safety plans
- Time out with teacher involved responsible for supervision
- Letters of apology, learning from behaviour forms
- Applying consequences in liaison with principal eg., misconduct forms, withdrawal from yard, suspension, allocated play space, Student Welfare Group,

Recovery:

Monitoring of children with special needs

Atmosphere of forgiveness

Labelling behaviour rather than child

New start philosophy

Awards and private and public acknowledgement of effort and achievement.

Restorative practices:

The philosophy of Restorative Practices informs a positive and formative approach to student behaviour management. A commitment to Restorative Practices has as its aim the promotion of resilience in the one harmed and the one causing harm. Restorative measures help students



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learn from their mistakes, grow in self discipline, take responsibility for their actions, recognise the impact of their actions on others, and reconcile and resolve conflict with others.

Student Wrongful Behaviour of a Serious Nature:

It is understood that student wrongful behaviour of a serious nature to be activity or behaviour of a student which:

- seriously undermines the ethos of the Catholic school; and/or
- consistently and deliberately fails to comply with any lawful order of a principal or teacher; and/or
- is offensive or dangerous to the physical or emotional health of any student or staff member; and/or
- consistently and deliberately interferes with the educational opportunities of other students.

Some wrongful behaviours of a serious nature are by definition criminal offences. These may include criminal damage of property, possession of a weapon, theft, assault, assault with weapons, use, possession or distribution of drugs, sexual assault. This list is indicative only and not all-inclusive. When a principal determines that a serious offence of a criminal nature has occurred, the welfare needs of the offending student(s) is paramount. The incident should be reported to the police at the earliest opportunity.

When it is judged by the school that a student has engaged in wrongful behaviour of a serious nature within the school community, it is recommended that a Behaviour Management Support Group be set up to:

- consider the behaviour of the student and the implications for the student and the school community
- consider the personal and social needs of the student, and how they may best be responded to
- determine what behaviour management action within the school's stated processes is most appropriate
- identify strategies to assist the student, following successful behaviour management, to re-establish his/her place satisfactorily in the school community
- ensure that decisions of the Behaviour Management Support Group are implemented
- access any relevant agencies to provide support.

In arriving at decisions, the Behaviour Management Support Group aims for consensus. Where this is not achievable, the principal (or principal's nominee) makes the decision, in accordance with school policies and directives. The decision of the Behaviour Management Support Group is recorded in writing and filed in the school records. Confidentiality should be honoured at all times.

In some instances, where the behaviour of a student is deemed to threaten immediate or ongoing harm, distress or danger to others, it may be necessary to withdraw or suspend the



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student temporarily from the student community, pending a meeting of the Behaviour Management Support Group. Responsibility for such a decision rests with the principal or the principal's nominee.

In-school Withdrawal:

Withdrawal from class and/or other school activities, if judged necessary as a behaviour management process, is best done in-school rather than out-of-school, as this maintains a student's connectedness and engagement with the school. It is recommended that school processes for the withdrawal of the student from some aspect(s) of the school program are structured positively to assist in the student's return to acceptable behaviours. An example is the provision of time, in an appropriate and supervised setting, for the student to reflect upon their behaviours and attitudes, the impact of these on themselves and others, reasons for preferring acceptable behaviours, and ways to find encouragement and assistance to achieve this goal. An allocated task in keeping with such a purpose is recommended.

Out-of-school Suspension:

If out-of-school suspension is judged appropriate by the school, it is recommended that it be for the shortest time necessary. At least one day prior to the day on which the suspension is to commence, the school ought notify the student's parent(s)/guardian(s), if possible by verbal communication initially and by confirmation in writing. The communication ought to include the reason for the suspension, the purpose of the suspension, and the date(s) on which the suspension will occur.

It is also recommended that the parent(s)/guardian(s) be offered the opportunity to participate in a meeting to consider these and other related matters, including:

- the legal and pastoral responsibilities of the parent(s)/guardian(s) during the time of suspension
- the school's responsibility for providing learning material during the time of suspension
- the process of settling back into the school environment, and how this is to be facilitated
- arrangements for monitoring the student's progress following his/her return to school.

If an initial verbal contact with the parent(s)/guardian(s) is not possible, it may be necessary to ask the student to take the written notice home to them as their first notification. This decision rests with the school authority, taking into account the age of the student, legal requirements, duty of care, and other relevant circumstances.

A student shall not be suspended for a total of more than nine school days in any one school year.



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Expulsion:

Under the most serious and extreme of circumstances, when a student has repeatedly engaged in serious wrongful behaviour and all other appropriate behaviour management processes have proved unsuccessful and the serious behaviour persists, it may be judged that the only responsible action left is expulsion. This is to be avoided in Catholic schools wherever possible. Only the principal has the authority to expel a student, having sought the prior approval of the diocesan Executive Director of Catholic Education.

It is an expectation of the CEOM that expulsion of a student from a Catholic school in the Archdiocese of Melbourne will not occur except in the most serious of circumstances, and when the following conditions all apply:

- the student has engaged in wrongful behaviour of a serious nature (see definition above),
- the school's other processes for addressing such behaviours have been applied and not been successful,
- the welfare and safety of others in the school community, or the need to maintain order and protect the rights of others, make it necessary that the student no longer be present in that school community.

Only the principal has the authority to expel a student. Prior to confirming an expulsion, the principal will:

- explain clearly to the student and the student's parent(s)/guardian(s) the reason(s) for the intended expulsion, and provide them with an opportunity to speak on behalf of the student
- in parish or regional schools, provide to the parish priest / canonical administrator as appropriate, formal written notification of the intended expulsion and the reasons for it and seek endorsement. In addition, provide to the Executive Director of Catholic Education formal written notification of the intended expulsion, and the reasons for it, and request that the Executive Director endorse the principal's decision
- in Congregation-owned schools, follow the required endorsement processes of that body.

Should the decision to expel the student be confirmed, the principal must ensure that the expulsion is formally recorded in the school's files, and provide to the parent(s)/guardian(s) of the expelled student a formal Notice of Expulsion. When possible, this notice is to be issued before or on the day the expulsion is to commence, and if that is not possible then as soon after that as possible. This notice needs to include:

- The reason(s) for the expulsion
- The commencement date of the expulsion
- Details of the Review and/or Appeal processes available*

*Natural justice must apply, and consequently there ought be available in every school a formally authorised process by which parent(s)/guardian(s) of an expelled student, and in some circumstances the expelled student himself/herself, may have the expulsion decision reviewed and/or appealed.



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