

PORT MACQUARIE STEINER SCHOOL

4.3 BEHAVIOUR MANAGEMENT AND DISCIPLINE POLICY

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Associated policies:	4.2 Child Protection Policy 2.2 Student Code of Conduct 1.1 Student Enrolment Policy	
Associated Laws:	<i>Education Act 1990</i> <i>Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998</i> <i>Crimes Act 1900</i> <i>Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998</i> <i>Health Records and Information Privacy Act 2002</i> <i>Commission for Children and Young People Act 1998</i>	

INTENTION

To provide guidance for staff, students, parents, and guardians on the School's expectations regarding behaviour management, relationships and disciplinary procedures which are based on principles of Steiner education and procedural fairness. This is to ensure that a positive and productive growth and learning environment is maintained for all students.

INTRODUCTION

The School aims to promote the discipline of self-control, cultivate virtuous qualities and acting for the welfare of others.

Discipline is a response to individuals and situations in such a way as to lead to the development of skills that promote responsibility and accountability. Such responses are tailored to different age levels. What is appropriate in the Kindergarten may be different in the Primary School. Through recognition of the implications of the stages of child development, as given by Rudolf Steiner, certain forms and rhythms are set in place so that the individuality of the child is protected, and safety is ensured.

Kindergarten – in these years, the child is most imitative and open and lives in an implicit confidence of goodness and love. The child models his or her behaviour on those adults most central or significant to his or her life. The adult, therefore, strives to be worthy as an example – in thought, word, and deed. Moral guidance is given in story form for this age group.

Primary – in these years, the authority of the teacher (adult) is fundamental. The child is disciple, (related to the root sense of discipline), and the teacher is author, (related to the root sense of authority). At heart, all children at this age naturally seek the security of this relationship.

DEFINITIONS

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Suspension – the temporary removal of a student from attending all the classes that a student would normally attend at a School to a maximum of 5 days (one week)

Expulsion – the permanent removal of a student from enrolment at School

Exclusion – the act of preventing a student's admission to a number of Schools

POLICY

This policy applies to the behaviour of students at school and while away from the school site on school endorsed activities.

Port Macquarie Steiner School aims to provide a nurturing learning environment where children can creatively explore the values of respect, reverence, co-operation, and goodness alongside their formal learning. Please refer to the Student Code of Conduct for detailed information on the expectation of students in relation to these values.

We collaboratively set expectations and teach students positive behaviours. Students are required to strive to meet these expectations and follow requests made by school staff.

Staff of the School aim to instill in the students a sense of responsibility for their own actions by creating an honest and open approach to behaviour management and discipline.

Under no circumstances is corporal punishment permitted.

The School does not explicitly or implicitly sanction the administering of corporal punishment by non-School persons, including parents, to enforce discipline at the School.

In some instances of unacceptable behaviour, the Principal (or their nominee), in consultation with the parents or guardians, contact School Liaison Policy and or Youth Liaison Officers and other support and health services available to the school community (see Wellbeing and Pastoral Care Policy for contact details). Such instances may include:

- Behaviour that is illegal or bordering on illegal;
- Behaviour that gives the school reasonable grounds to suspect a mental health concern;
- Bullying; or
- Behaviour that implies specialist assessment.

The School may choose to send a student home who, if for no apparent reason they are being unsafe by refusing to take a direction, are out of control or being abusive.

For serious misconduct, whether connected to previous misconduct or isolated incidents, it may be necessary to suspend or expel a student from the School.

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Sections 1-8 of this policy form the behaviour management framework.

1. Helping Students to Meet Expectations

The School encourages and helps the students meet the expectations outlined in the Student Code of Conduct by:

- Staff modelling appropriate behaviour for the students to develop an understanding of the expectations that are required of them;
- Teachers selecting stories that exemplify the expectation and show appropriate social responses to guide students;
- Staff encouraging and positively acknowledging students who are striving to meet these expectations;
- Staff positively acknowledging students who are meeting these expectations;
- Teaching the expectations of student behaviour through discussion and or example;
- Teachers redirecting students engaged in misconduct or inappropriate behaviour, helping them to seek creative solutions and providing an opportunity for the student to replace misconduct with appropriate behaviour; and
- Teachers speaking to the whole class about behaviour, expectations of behaviour, and about possible solutions for ongoing issues;
- Parents and guardians encouraging their children to meet the expectations of the School and find ways of mutually working with the School to support positive behaviour in their children.

To support students to develop more appropriate behaviours, the School adopts an approach of least to most intrusive responses. The response and discipline are related to the nature and impact of the misconduct, the age of the child and any previous related misconduct.

2. If Expectations Are Not Met

If a student is not meeting expectations once they have been taught them and understand them, teachers will correct students in a non-obtrusive way, suggesting an appropriate action and or stating the desired behaviour. The student may be required to engage in considered restorative practices.

3. Persistent Unacceptable Behaviour

If the behaviour persists and or is impacting negatively on others, teachers will:

- consistently deliver **natural consequences** as close as possible to the occurrence of the behaviour, and then provide opportunities for students to learn from their

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behaviour.

Natural consequences can include:

- requiring the student to take appropriate actions to reverse the negative effects of the behaviour as far as possible
- making clear to the student all other possible negative effects of the behaviour, even if they did not happen this time
- giving the student opportunities to make restitution for not meeting expectations and to practice the appropriate actions or desired behaviour
- consequences that are appropriate for the student's individuality, temperament, and stage of development, while being consistent with the class and school

Natural consequences do not include:

- physical punishment of any nature
 - emotional punishment of any nature
 - language directed to a student that is demeaning or could be psychologically damaging
 - restoration tasks that are not connected with a positive benefit for the student, the class, or the School
- send home a Behaviour Slip to communicate the misconduct or issue with parents;
 - record the instance of unacceptable behaviour on the student file in Sentral for the purposes of keeping a record and implementing long term behaviour management strategies or Individual Behaviour Support Plans;
 - Teachers may request a disciplinary meeting with parents at any time there is a behavioural concern for a student. This may occur after one Behaviour Slip or multiple Behaviour Slips and is at the discretion of the teacher;
 - send the student to the Principal (or their nominee) if the unacceptable behaviour continues. Parents may be informed and consulted and, where necessary, a **consequence** will be determined;

Consequences may include:

- Principal overseeing alternative activities for a period of time
- Discussion with the student about the unacceptable behaviour ending in agreed restitution
- Parent initiated consequences outside of school
- Suspension from specific activities, privileges (for particular times in the school day or entirely for a period of time)
- Individual behaviour support planning
- Short or long term suspension from the School
- In extreme cases - expulsion, or exclusion from the School

4. Teacher Reflection

It is to be encouraged where possible that the teacher takes time to reflect on the underlying cause of the behaviour in question and attempt then to deal with the cause first before initiating disciplinary action. Teachers may also create a Child Study on a particular child, which take place in faculty meetings.

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5. Disciplinary Meetings

Teachers may request a disciplinary meeting with parents or guardians at any time there is a behavioural concern for a student. This may occur after one Behaviour Slip or multiple Behaviour Slips and is at the discretion of the teacher.

Continued or repeated disrespectful or disruptive behaviour in or out of class will be the subject of a disciplinary meeting with the parents or guardians and the child's teacher.

If disciplinary meetings are unproductive and no progress is made, a child may be suspended or expelled from the School.

Parents or guardians of a student at the School may request a meeting with their child's teacher to discuss behaviour issues at any time there is a concern. A parent or guardian may only request a meeting to discuss their own child/ren.

6. Individual Behaviour Support Plans

There may be a small number of students who persistently display inappropriate behaviour that impacts on other students and or impinges the safety of themselves and or others. For these students, an Individual Behaviour Support Plan will be developed by the teacher and in consultation with the parents or guardians and other specialists as appropriate. This plan may include a crisis management response. The nature of the plan will reflect the child's stage of development and will be discussed amongst the faculty.

All Individual Behaviour Support Plans are to be recorded and updated on the student's file on Sentral.

The student's teacher will coordinate the Individual Behaviour Support Plan and may use AISNSW in the consultation process, especially where there is a likelihood of disagreement between the school and parents or guardians.

If a student does not comply with their Individual Behaviour Support Plan the parents or guardians will be contacted and asked to take their child home for the remainder of the day. The school will request a disciplinary meeting with parent or guardian before their child returns to school.

The Individual Behaviour Support Plans will be reviewed at a set time in order for the strategies to be appraised.

7. Suspension and Expulsion

In serious cases or cases of persistent unacceptable behaviour, where it will be in the best

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interests of the school community and or the student involved, a Principal (or their nominee) may suspend or expel a student from school.

Suspension is not intended as a punishment. It is one strategy for managing inappropriate behaviour within this policy. It is most effective when it highlights the parents' responsibility for taking an active role, in partnership with the school, to modify the inappropriate behaviour of their child. The School will work with parents with a view to assisting a suspended student to re-join the school community as quickly as possible.

Suspension can also allow time for

- school personnel to plan appropriate support for the student to assist with a successful return to school
- measures to be put in place to ensure the safety of students and staff
- the student to reflect on their behaviour

Before a suspension is imposed, with the exception of the cases warranting immediate suspension (described below), or other serious instances of unacceptable behaviour that impact on the safety or welfare of students or staff, the Principal (or their nominee) will:

- Ensure that appropriate learning and support strategies and discipline options have been applied and documented according to the school's policies
- Ensure that appropriate support personnel available within the school system, AISNSW and externally have been involved
- Ensure that discussion has occurred with the student and parents regarding specific behaviour which the school considers unacceptable and which may lead to suspension
- develop, in conjunction with AISNSW, Individual Behaviour Support Plans to assist the student to manage inappropriate behaviour
- provide a formal written caution detailing inappropriate behaviours, as well as clear expectations of what is required of the student in future
- record all action taken

In some circumstances the Principal (or their nominee) may determine that a student should be suspended immediately. This will usually be due, but not limited, to reasons such as the safety of students or staff.

The Principal (or their nominee) must suspend immediately and consistently with this policy (including procedural fairness) any student who is physically violent.

The Principal (or their nominee) is required to seek advice from AISNSW prior to suspending or expelling any student. Only the Principal (or their nominee) can decide that a student should be suspended and for how long, or if a student is to be expelled. The Principal (or their nominee) will exercise this authority having regard to their responsibilities to the whole school community and to the principles of procedural fairness.

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Parents or guardians will be immediately notified of cases of intended suspension or expulsion and the situation will be handled in accordance with the **principles of procedural fairness**, which includes the following two core principles:

The **hearing rule**, which defines the right of a person against whom an allegation has been made to:

- Know the allegations related to a specific matter and any other information which will be taken into account in considering the matter;
- Know the process by which the matter will be considered;
- Respond to the allegations;
- Know how to seek a review of the decision made in response to the allegations

The **right to an unbiased decision**, which includes the right to:

- Impartiality in an investigation and decision making and an absence of bias by a decision maker.

Where the incident is severe or involves a student with violent behaviour, the student may be immediately suspended for up to five days. For students in classes K – 1 the word **suspension** may be replaced with the words, **sent home**.

In cases of suspensions longer than one day, and expulsion, the student and parents or guardians have the right to:

- know the allegations related to the suspension or expulsion and any other information which will be taken into account in considering the matter;
- know the process by which the matter will be considered;
- respond to the allegations; and
- know how to seek a review of the decision made in response to the allegations.

The Principal (or their nominee) will reach a preliminary decision in relation to the allegation and any consequences to be imposed and advise the student and parents or guardians of that view. If a parent or guardian wishes to seek a review of a decision, they will be required to submit an appeal. Appeals are handled following the principles of procedural fairness and are to be heard by a responsible person(s) other than those responsible for the original decision.

Procedural fairness also includes making available to parents or guardians, policies and procedures under which disciplinary action is taken. It also includes providing details of an allegation relating to a specific matter or incident unless restricted under legislation.

Consideration must be given as to whether an incident resulting in suspension gives rise to a requirement to make a mandatory report to the Child Protection Helpline (132 111) or contact with the Child Wellbeing Unit (02 9269 9400).

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8. Return to School

Return to the School will be under the conditions of an agreement, signed by the parents or guardians and the Principal (or their nominee). The teacher and Principal (or their nominee) meet with the student and parents or guardians to set out conditions for the student continuing at school. The meeting is to be recorded along with the agreements made.

Any further aggressive or violent behaviour may result in an immediate one-week (5 days) suspension. (Repeat Steps for Procedural Fairness above)

The school may also recommend parents or guardians seek professional counselling for their child in order to ascertain any underlying problems. More information on this process is included in the School's Student Wellbeing and Pastoral Care Policy.

Support Offered in Disciplinary Meetings

Parents and guardians may choose to have a support person or observer attend a disciplinary meeting or discussion relating to the discipline of their child/ren at any level of the process. The parent or guardian must notify the teacher or Principal (whoever is holding the meeting) of their decision to do so, the name of the support person and their relationship to the student, prior to the scheduled meeting.

The school will make available interpreter services at disciplinary meetings where required. This service may be requested by the teacher or a parent or guardian of a student at the school. When interpreter services are used in a disciplinary meeting, their name and contact details are to be recorded in the meeting notes.

Conflict of Interest

In cases where there is a conflict of interest at any step between the teacher and any other parties involved in the process, assistance can be called on from the Principal (or their nominee) or the School Board.

** The disciplinary procedures undertaken by the School focus on acknowledgement of the breach of School rules and Codes of Conduct, followed by a process of considered restorative practices. Corporal punishment is expressly prohibited. The administering of corporal punishment by non-School persons, including parents, to enforce discipline at the School is not condoned. Where the use of corporal punishment is brought to the attention of the School and constitutes risk of significant harm to the child, notification will be made to the appropriate agencies under Child Protection legislation.*

Exclusion of a student

The Port Macquarie Steiner School does not practice exclusion in that it does not prevent student attendance at other schools in the enacting of this policy.

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RESOURCES

Enrolment Contract and Agreement of Placement
Kindergarten Parent Handbook
Teacher and Parent Meeting Record
Incident Report Form
Behaviour Slip
Individual Behaviour Support Plan

REVIEW

This policy will be reviewed annually.