Penola Catholic College Student Behaviour Support Procedures

Melbourne Archdiocese Catholic Schools

1. Introduction

Melbourne Archdiocese Catholic Schools Ltd (**MACS**) schools are schools which operate with the consent of the Catholic Archbishop of Melbourne and are owned, operated and governed by Melbourne Archdiocese Catholic Schools Ltd (MACS).

The Principal is responsible for overseeing the implementation of the *Student Behaviour Support Procedures*.

2. General guidelines

The Principal will:

- In alignment with the MACS *Vision for Engagement*, commit to fostering calm, respectful and inclusive environments where every student feels safe, valued and empowered to thrive academically, socially and emotionally.
- Report an incident via MACS Guard for any incident resulting in injury to a person.
- Report significant and/or repeated student behavioural incidents where wellbeing or safety was at risk or aggressive behaviour or physical threats involving students, Parents and Carers or the public via MACS Guard.
- Comply with the Child Safe Standards and consider the additional circumstances that may arise for certain students who may experience vulnerability, including:
  - Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children and young people and providing and promoting a culturally safe environment for them
  - children and young people with disability, those from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, those unable to live at home and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex children and young people.
- Initiate additional actions for these students by:
  - seeking support and direction from MACS, including the Student Engagement Unit and the Senior Manager, School Leadership (SMSL) in the relevant Regional Office
  - seeking advice from the school's Designated Teacher or the student's LOOKOUT Education Support Centre Case Manager for students in out of home care (OoHC)
  - ensuring reasonable adjustments are in place to support participation, engagement and self-regulation especially where behaviours relate to disability.
- Refer to the Victoria Police to obtain advice if they suspect a criminal offence may have occurred.

3. Procedural fairness

The Principal will ensure that the:

- implementation of the policy and procedures for Student Behaviour Support are fair and reasonable, afford procedural fairness, are consistent and non-discriminatory
- information provided to the student and Parents and Carers is accessible, age-appropriate and available in a range of languages and formats as needed
- student and Parents and Carers have the opportunity to be heard throughout any process associated with this procedure
- information provided by the student and Parents and Carers will be considered throughout any process associated with this procedure.

4. Building school capacity

The Principal will clearly document and administer structured whole-school approaches that build and maintain the school's capacity to foster safe, inclusive and positive school environments. This includes:

- Implementing a structured, whole-school behaviour support program aligned with a tiered prevention framework to build staff capacity and to consistently apply evidence-based practices that foster safe, respectful and positive learning environments.
- Ensuring all staff participate in evidence-informed, culturally responsive behaviour support professional learning, as determined by the Principal (e.g. Team Well, Positive Narration, Restorative Practices etc).
  - Relevant staff complete training in the following areas:
    (a) Culturally responsive practices
    (b) Positive behaviour frameworks (e.g. PBL or equivalent)
    (c) Collecting, analysing, using and interpreting school-wide behaviour data.
- Clear induction processes are provided to all staff that include explicit instruction on:
  - Whole-school behaviour expectations
  - Behaviour referral procedures and escalation pathways
  - Trauma-informed and neuro-affirming practices and responses.
- Building and maintaining staff capacity and confidence in responding to student behaviour through the implementation of a structured, professional learning model – such as instructional coaching, mentoring or peer-support. [eg. Professional Practice Coaching Program].
- Informing staff of the relevant contacts in MACS who are responsible for behaviour support and escalation, and ensuring their understanding of how and when to access their support. [eg. liaising with Year Level Leaders, Directors of Students and/or Learning Diversity Leaders within the College for support and guidance in escalating supports and accessing MACS resources and personnel].
- Recognising staff wellbeing as a foundational element in creating safe and supportive school environments (refer to the Health, Safety and Wellbeing Policy and the Staff Wellbeing Hub for support and advice).

5. Building school understanding

The Principal will clearly document and administer structured whole-school approaches that build and maintain the school's capacity to foster safe, inclusive and positive school environments. This includes:

- Responding to behaviour in ways that are fair, developmentally appropriate, and tailored to the individual needs of the student, with the goal of promoting future positive and respectful behaviour.
- Consistently modelling inclusive, respectful, and positive behaviours in their interactions with students, colleagues and the wider school community.
- Providing students with increased support during key transition stages, such as moving between year levels, transitioning to secondary school, moving to another school or transitioning out of secondary school, with a focus on students' social and emotional wellbeing.

Incorporating targeted supports that promote cultural safety, equity and accessibility for students requiring Tier 2 or Tier 3 behavioural supports, particularly those who may experience vulnerability, as outlined in the Child Safe Standards.

- For Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander students, the Principal (or nominated staff member) will:
  - consult with an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander staff member and invite them to all planning meetings (e.g. Student Support Group (SSG), Student Behaviour Support Plan development, intervention planning)

  - contact the MACS Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Centre of Expertise for culturally responsive advice and support
  - ensure that all plans reflect culturally safe approaches and include documented evidence of consultation with relevant cultural representatives, the Principal may refer to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Action Plan.
- For students in OoHC, the Principal (or nominated staff member) will:
  - contact the school's Designated Teacher or the student's LOOKOUT Education Support Centre case manager and include them in all planning and decision-making processes
  - invite the case manager to relevant meetings and provide them with updates, documentation, and copies of all plans developed
  - ensure that plans take into account the student's care status, trauma-informed approaches, and the need for collaboration with external supports.
- For English as an Additional Language (EAL) students, the Principal (or nominated staff member) will:
  - recognise and respond to the diverse cultural and linguistic strengths of students and Parents and Carers, ensuring that planning and support processes are inclusive, respectful and affirm identity
  - facilitate meaningful participation in planning conversations by arranging interpreters or engaging staff with relevant language and cultural knowledge, so that families and students feel heard, valued and understood
  - collaborate with EAL specialists and support services to co-design communication and engagement strategies that reflect best practice in culturally responsive education
  - ensure all communication with families and students is inclusive, accessible and culturally attuned, fostering trust, belonging and shared understanding. For more information, the Principal may refer to the New Arrivals and Refugees page on CEVN.

6. Tiered system of supports to behaviour framework

The Principal will clearly document and administer structured whole-school approaches to build and maintain the school's capacity to provide tiered systems of supports (e.g. Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) model or equivalent) to address the diverse behavioural needs of students. Tiered system of supports prioritise consistency, inclusivity and data-driven decision making across the three tiers of intervention (refer to the MTSS page on CEVN for more information).

At Penola Catholic College, we utilise tiered systems of support in our commitment to holistic and personalised support for students, and underpinning our philosophy of high expectations and high support. The College determines appropriate strategies based on the observed needs of students.

Strategies at tier 1 (ie. Universal Supports intended to support all students) include:

- High-quality differentiated teaching and learning in all classes;
- Homeroom/Pastoral programs (organisation, connection)
- Co-Curricular activities and programs (connection, creativity)
- the House System (fostering belonging and connection);
- Social-Emotional Learning Programs (eg. Respectful Relationships, the Resilience Project);
- Restorative Practices
- Explicit behaviour expectations and routines;
- Whole-school wellbeing education through a Catholic lens (eg. Consent education)
- Pathways Support/Career Mapping

Strategies at tiers (ie. Targeted Supports intended to support some students) include:

- Small group wellbeing or learning interventions (Revved Up)
- Homeroom Teacher/YLC check-ins for emerging concerns

- Academic support programs (Homework club, Maths club, learning adjustments)
- Behaviour Tracking Sheets
- Behaviour support plans / monitoring
- Exit Passes
- Sensory Strategies
- Care team / wellbeing team involvement
- Parent communication and partnership for emerging concerns

Strategies at tier 3 (ie. Intensive Supports intended to support some students) include:

- Counselling (psychologists, social workers)
- Short-termTherapy/Intervention (Speech Pathologist, Occupational Therapist)
- Individual learning, behaviour, safety, attendance support and return to school plans
- One-on-one mentoring
- Priming strategies
- Modified Timetables
- College Nurse support (medical needs, ongoing monitoring)
- Educational Assessment Referrals (Psychologist, Speech Pathologist, Occupational Therapist)
- Environmental Modifications
- External referrals (mental health, family support services)
- Complex case management and engagement with external practitioners

7. Responding to behaviours that do not meet expectations

The Principal will clearly document and administer structured whole-school approaches to build and maintain the school's capacity to instructionally respond to student behaviours that do not meet expectations.

7.1. Disciplinary decision-making

In making disciplinary decisions, the Principal will:

- Consider appropriate and supportive strategies, such as mental health and wellbeing or behaviour interventions, before implementing any disciplinary response.
- Ensure responses to behaviour are:
  - proportionate to the nature and severity of the behaviour
  - aligned with the school's staged response framework
  - addressing the underlying causes, influences and triggers
  - consistent with the school's whole-school behaviour support approach.
- Implement clear, documented, structured and supportive intervention strategies that ensure timely and appropriate responses to behaviours that do not meet expectations.
- Ensure staff collaborate with school leadership and, where necessary, seek support from the MACS Student Engagement Unit and/or the SMSL in the relevant MACS Regional Office for students with ongoing or escalating behaviour concerns.
- Determine if a student's behaviour requires a suspension, negotiated transfer or expulsion (refer to the Suspension, Negotiated Transfer and Expulsion of Students Procedures to ensure compliance with MACS requirements).
- Promptly record and respond, sensitively and fairly, to incidents, perceived or actual, of bullying, harassment and cyberbullying.
- Report any incident resulting in injury to a person via MACS Guard.

- Refer any suspected deepfake incidents to the Victoria Police.
- Consult with the Police about any circumstances involving suspected illegal activity before conducting interviews or handling evidence [relevant matters to be escalated to the Deputy Principal Head of Campus and/or College Principal]
- Refer to the school's Emergency Response Plan that outlines the roles and responsibilities of key staff in high-risk situations.

7.2. Assessment and information gathering

In assessing and gathering information about student behaviour that does not meet expectations, the Principal will ensure the following steps are followed:

- Conduct a thorough assessment of the behaviour and gather information through:
  - direct observations of the behaviour in relevant contexts
  - conversations with the student and any others involved
  - engagement with Parents and Carers
  - consultation with relevant school staff.
- Ensure staff act with procedural fairness (as outlined at (3) in this procedure) and:
  - inform the student when their behaviour does not meet expectations and why
  - consider the student's perspective and rights before determining any disciplinary outcome
  - consider the specific needs and circumstances of the student when responding to behaviours that do not meet expectations, including the additional circumstances that may arise for certain students who may experience vulnerability (as outlined at (2) in this procedure)
  - use trauma-informed approaches in all assessments and interactions
  - establish a Program Support Group (PSG) for any student who demonstrates behaviours that do not meet expectations. The PSG will identify the student's needs, coordinate appropriate supports and monitor progress
  - work collaboratively with the student and their Parents and Carers to develop relevant individualised support plans (e.g. Student Behaviour Support Plan, Student Safety Plan), following incidents of complex behaviours that do not meet expectations. These plans must be informed by assessment data, aligned with the student's needs, and regularly reviewed.

8. Breach of Student Code of Conduct

The Principal will clearly document and administer structured whole-school approaches to build and maintain the school's capacity to respond to student behaviour that breaches the Student Code of Conduct or the *Student Behaviour Support Policy*. This includes:

- Responding in alignment with the school's tiered system of supports approach to behaviour.
- Applying responses that are proportionate, consistent and appropriate to the nature of the breach, while considering the student's age, developmental stage and individual circumstances.
- Ensuring all consequences are:
  - educative in nature, aiming to teach appropriate behaviours rather than punish
  - aligned with school-wide behavioural expectations, and
  - framed as a learning opportunity, supporting the student to reflect and repair.
- Following a staged response model to behaviours that do not meet expectations, in line with the Positive Behaviour Support Guidelines; including:
  - documenting behavioural incidents
  - consulting with the Student Support or Wellbeing Team as appropriate
  - communicating with families
  - implementing agreed-upon supports.

- Following the *Student Behaviour Support Policy* and related procedures ensuring consultation with leadership and thorough documentation of all actions in cases of serious behaviour breaches.

9. Suspension, negotiated transfer and expulsion

The Principal will document and administer structured, whole-school approaches to build and maintain the school's capacity to effectively administer the *Suspension, Negotiated Transfer and Expulsion of Students Procedures*. This includes:

- Ensuring this procedure is published on the school's website and provided to families upon enrolment, as well as shared with the wider school community at the start of each academic year.
- Maintaining a register of all suspensions, negotiated transfers and expulsions within the school.

9.1. Same-day response

The Principal will document and administer structured, whole-school approaches to support the effective use of the same-day response, including the extension to the same-day response. These actions must follow the processes outlined in the *Suspension, Negotiated Transfer and Expulsion of Students Procedures*.

10. Exclusionary practices

10.1. Parameters around restraint or seclusion use

The Principal will clearly document structured, whole-school approaches to build and maintain the school's capacity to respond to student behaviour that may require limited use of restraint or seclusion. This includes ensuring clear understanding of the following:

- Restraint or seclusion may only be used in exceptional circumstances, where there is an immediate risk of physical harm to the student or others. Any such action must be in the best interest of the student and:
  - reasonable in the circumstances
  - necessary to prevent harm
  - proportionate to the level of risk
  - used only as a last resort and for the shortest possible time with minimal force applied.
- Physical restraint or seclusion use is not permitted in any MACS Student Behaviour Support Plan or Student Safety Plan.
- The legal and ethical risks associated with restraint or seclusion.
- The increased risk of physical or emotional trauma for the student and the staff involved that restraint or seclusion actions may cause.
- That any use of restraint or seclusion must be based on professional judgement at the time and specific to the situation.
- Where restraint or seclusion is used, staff must:
  - immediately report the incident to the Principal or the nominated staff member
  - complete a detailed incident report
  - notify the student's Parents or Carers as soon as possible
  - report the incident via MACS Guard in accordance with MACS protocols.
- The Principal reviews all incidents involving restraint or seclusion to ensure compliance with the *Student Behaviour Support Policy* and determine if follow-up support or review is required for the student and/or staff involved.
- The use of corporal punishment is expressly prohibited in all MACS schools and under the *Education and Training Reform Act 2006* (Vic).

10.2. Informal suspensions and soft expulsions

The Principal does not endorse 'informal suspensions' or 'soft expulsions' where they are not formally documented. Informal suspensions include practices such as reset days, internal suspensions, modified timetables used as circuit breakers or to manage staffing constraints or excluding student(s) from learning when a leader is unavailable. Soft expulsions refer to situations where a student is encouraged to leave the school without undergoing a formal expulsion process.

11. Complaints

The Principal will clearly document and administer the school's Complaints Handling Policy in accordance with the Complaints Handling Policy for MACS schools. Parents and Carers may make a complaint with respect to a decision related to student behaviour under the Complaints Handling Policy.

12. Roles and reporting responsibilities

Role	Responsibility	Reporting requirement (if applicable)
Principal	Ensure all policies and procedures for the care, safety and welfare of students are publicly available.	
Principal	Establish and apply school processes to effectively implement the policy and procedures.	
Principal	Establish and apply school processes to maintain a register of suspensions, negotiated transfers and expulsions.	
Principal	Report any incident resulting in injury to a person via MACS Guard.	
Principal	Report any significant and/or repeated student behavioural incidents, where wellbeing or safety was at risk, or any aggressive behaviour or physical threats involving students, Parents and Carers or the public via MACS Guard.	
School Leaders (Principals, Deputy Principals)	Coordinate targeted support for students whose behaviour indicates emerging or persistent needs.	Submit all Student Engagement Unit consultation requests and maintain case-notes via the ROSAE application on CEVN.
School staff (all)	Understand and apply school processes to ensure consistent application and adherence to policy and procedures.	

13. Definitions

Definitions of standard terms used in this Policy can be found in the Glossary of Terms.

Behaviours that do not meet expectations

Behaviour that either interferes with the safety or learning of the student or other students or interferes with the safety of school staff or a member of the school community.

Deepfake

A deepfake is a digital photo, video or sound file of a real person that has been edited to create a realistic but false depiction of them doing or saying something that they did not actually do or say. Deepfakes are created using artificial intelligence software that draws on a large number of photos or recordings of the person to model and create content.

14. Related policies and documents

Supporting documents

Positive Behaviour Support Guidelines
Return to School Plan
Student Absence Learning Plan
Student Behaviour Support Plan – Template
Student Safety Plan – Template
Suspension, Negotiated Transfer and Expulsion of Students Procedures – Template for schools

Related MACS policies and documents

Attendance Policy
Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy
Child Safety and Wellbeing Procedures
Child Safety and Wellbeing Recordkeeping Procedures
Code of Conduct for MACS Staff
Complaints Handling Policy
Duty of Care Policy
Enrolment Policy
Health, Safety and Wellbeing Policy
ICT Acceptable Usage Policy – Students
Pastoral Care of Students Policy
Reportable Conduct Policy
Student Behaviour Support Policy
Student Bullying Prevention and Response Policy
Student Bullying Prevention and Response Procedures – Template for schools
Student Code of Conduct

Resources (external)

Australian Student Wellbeing Framework (2018)

Department of Education and Training (Vic). 2021. Cybersafety and Responsible Use of Digital Technologies

Department of Education and Training (Vic). 2020. Mobile Phones - Student Use.

eSmart – assists schools to develop a culture that promotes the safe, smart and responsible use of technology.

eSafety Commissioner – provides a range of up-to-date information and resources, coupled with a complaints system to assist children who experience serious cyberbullying and image-based abuse.

Privacy Compliance Manual (2020). Catholic Education Commission of Victoria Ltd (CECV) (CEVN website)

Safe Socials | vic.gov.au

Student Wellbeing Hub

Public Record Office Victoria Recordkeeping Standards

Policy information table

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