

## PORT MACQUARIE STEINER SCHOOL

### 4.3 BEHAVIOUR MANAGEMENT AND DISCIPLINE POLICY

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<b>Associated policies:</b>	4.2 PMQSS Child Protection Policy 2.2 PMQSS Student Code of Conduct 1.1 PMQSS Student Enrolment Policy	
<b>Associated Laws:</b>	<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.

*"The challenge in discipline is that you have to represent both grace and justice at the same time" (S Levy, 1996).*

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 different at differing age levels. What is appropriate in the Kindergarten will 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.

The rhythms that are established may include the daily and weekly rhythms of the timetable, the monthly Main Lesson subject, the seasonal celebrations or how many times per day the teacher shakes students' hands. Form may include the School's accepted social manners and etiquette, the structure of sitting in a circle at the beginning of the School day, attendance, type of food brought to school, the act of shaking the teacher's hand or the way the School day begins and ends (things that uphold the School's ethos and values). These rhythms and forms encourage the progression from outer discipline (as in Kindergarten, where through imitation the child is enfolded in a form totally conceived by the teacher) to inner (self) discipline as the child matures, culminating in adulthood.

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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.

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.

A child should not be shamed in front of others but inspired to act in an appropriate manner while ensuring in the eyes of others that fairness has been achieved.

The discipline between teacher and child will best operate if the teacher inspires a rich appreciation of the wholeness and beauty of the world i.e. if a reverent and artistic dimension to life is nurtured. The imparting of knowledge and the inspiration for learning should be thought of as an art in themselves. Also, in Steiner Education, the teacher typically has an unquestioned authority that arises quite naturally and is developed over years with their class. This authority is not expressed in a fixed way, but is creative and mobile, changing to meet new situations as the child grows older.

The forms and rhythms created by the Class Teacher provide a sense of security as students know what happens and when. This protects and nurtures the child while allowing spontaneity and expression of individuality.

The following extract is from the NESA Registered and Accredited Individual Non-government Schools (NSW) Manual, December 2017:

*“Procedural fairness is a basic right of all when dealing with authorities. Procedural fairness refers to what is sometimes described as the ‘hearing rule’ and the ‘right to an unbiased decision’.*

*The ‘hearing rule’ includes the right of the 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; and*
- *know how to seek a review of the decision made in response to the allegations.*

*The ‘right to an unbiased decision’ includes the right to:*

- *impartiality in an investigation and decision making; and*
- *an absence of bias by a decision-maker.*

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#### DEFINITIONS

**Suspension** – the temporary removal of a student from attending all of 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 all staff, students, parents and guardians of the School. This policy will be made available to staff during their induction and to parents and guardians as part of the Handbook and at any time upon request.

##### 1. Expectations

Students, parents and staff of the School are to be treated with respect at all times, including when behavior management and disciplinary actions are being carried out. Under no circumstances, are practices of humiliation or being made an example of to be used.

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.

Student behaviour may be recorded on the student’s file for the purposes of keeping a record and implementing long term behaviour management strategies. This is done using an Incident Report Form. Daily behaviour is to be assessed daily and not carried over into the next day i.e. students are not to be made to feel that previous behaviour or consequences of previous behaviour have any hold on the current day. Staff of the School aim to encourage the idea that each day is a new opportunity regardless of what happened prior.

Students are required to abide by the PMQSS Student Code of Conduct and to follow the directions of teachers and other people with authority delegated by the School.

##### 2. Disciplinary Action

Where a student disregards rules, instructions or otherwise engages in conduct which causes or may cause harm or undue disturbance to the School, staff members or other students, the student may be subject to disciplinary action and required to engage in considered restorative practices.

The disciplinary procedures undertaken and restorative practices required by the School vary according to the incident. When advised of an allegation, the student and parents or guardians will be informed of the procedural steps to be followed in dealing with the matter. In relation to all matters to be investigated, the student will be informed of the nature of the allegation and given an opportunity to respond to the allegations, as outlined above by the ‘hearing rule’.

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The consequences will vary according to the behavior of the student. Students will be supported to address their behaviour through considered restorative practices under the guidance of the Class Teacher. At the lower end of the scale, removing the student for quiet time to reflect may be appropriate. At the upper end of the scale, the behavior could result in suspension or expulsion. It is to be encouraged where possible that the Class Teacher take 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. **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.**

#### 3. Disciplinary Interviews

The Head Teacher, Class Teacher or a parent or guardian of a student of the School may request an interview to discuss disciplinary issues regarding a student. A parent or guardian may only request an interview to discuss matters relevant to their child/ren. Proceedings and outcomes of any interviews or discussions are to be recorded by the Administration Officer or their nominee and kept on the student's file.

Parents and guardians may choose to have a support person or observer attend a formal interview or discussion relating to the discipline of their child/ren. The parent or guardian must notify the Head Teacher or Class Teacher (whoever is holding the interview) of their decision to do so, the name of the support person and their relationship to the student, prior to the scheduled interview.

The School will make available interpreter services at disciplinary interviews where required. This service may be requested by the Head Teacher, Class Teacher or a parent or guardian of a student at the School. When interpreter services are used in a disciplinary interview, their name and contact details are to be recorded by the Administration Officer (or their nominee).

Parents and guardians are able to appeal or apply for a review of preliminary disciplinary decisions that have been made regarding their child/ren. Appeals and reviews 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. Proceedings and outcomes of the appeal are to be recorded by the Administration Officer (or their nominee) and kept on the student's file.

#### PROCEDURE(S)

##### **Suspension or expulsion of a student:**

Should the situation arise where a student is to be considered for suspension or expulsion, the following procedure is to be followed:

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1. The Class Teacher or teacher on duty is to complete an Incident Report Form and report the incident to the Head Teacher or their nominee. If students observe the incident, they are to report it to the class teacher or teacher on duty who will then complete the form.
2. An appointment time is to be set up with all parties involved where the Head Teacher conducts an interview of all parties involved. A Teacher and Parent Meeting Record is to be completed and these steps followed to ensure there is a process of 'procedural fairness'.

**Basic steps for Procedural fairness:**

- Outline the alleged behaviour
  - Allow the student to respond
  - Consider the response
  - Indicate the School's view and likely action to the student and parents/guardians
  - Consider any further comment or appeal particularly in relation to suspension, expulsion or exclusion
  - Make a final decision
3. The Head Teacher 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. The student and parents or guardians would be advised that if they wish to appeal or review this preliminary decision, they are required to make an application in writing for a review to the Head Teacher or their nominee and submit any information they want to be considered during the review process. Appeals and reviews 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.
  4. 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**. The student's history of violent behaviour should be recorded in an Incident Report Form and kept in the student's file. Note that it is important to consider individual circumstances and in some cases being excluded from particular activities or the students own class may be more effective. The aim should be to educate the child so as to prevent the behaviour from reoccurring and jeopardising the safety of others.
  5. The Class Teacher and another member of the School or the Head Teacher, meet with the student and parents or guardians to set out conditions for the student continuing at School. Records of the meeting are to be taken using the Teacher and Parent Meeting Record and kept in the student's file.
  6. Any further aggressive or violent behaviour may result in an immediate one-week (5

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days) suspension. (Repeat Steps for Procedural Fairness above)

#### **Exclusion of a student:**

In a School offering early stage 1 (Kindergarten) and stage 1(Class 1&2) the exclusion of a student would be extremely rare and all other alternatives to exclusion should have been fully explored following the procedure above for suspension and expulsion with procedural fairness. In this extreme circumstance, the Head Teacher may make a submission to an appropriate authority, or to other Schools, recommending the permanent exclusion of a student from the registration system of which the School is a member, or from other Schools.

**Conflict of Interest:** In cases where there is a conflict of interest at any step between the Class Teacher and any other parties involved in the process, assistance can be called on from the Head Teacher or the 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.*

#### **Behavioural Management and Discipline Policy Guidelines**

In the Kindergarten and Year 1 and 2 classes, most behavioural difficulties will be worked with in the classroom. The Teacher works mostly with a creative approach to discipline. The main tool is a very strong rhythm and an imaginative approach to introducing any change throughout the day, eg all transition periods are carried by verses and songs.

Another tool to resolve behavioural difficulties is to bring a strong message through a story told by the Teacher for a whole week.

The young child lives in the present and does not understand consequences.

One needs to respond to a disruptive action immediately in a clear and simple way. Explanations and justification often create confusion in the child and place undue burden on them, entering them into the adult world of responsibility before their time. If a child hurts someone else, he or she should be encouraged to care for that person.

How teachers can respond to an unacceptable behaviour or action:

- redirect the child's energy e.g. encourage the child to play with someone else, give a job (sweeping);
- keep the child with them;
- remove the child from the playground or room for a certain time (with supervision);

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and

- if behaviour continues, meet with and speak to parents or guardians.

If difficulties persist after taking these approaches, the following steps will be in place:

STEP 1 - Bring child close to the Teacher to ensure other children are safe

STEP 2 - Find more appropriate tasks for the child

STEP 3 - Inform parents or guardians – arrange a meeting to discuss another approach

STEP 4 - In rare cases, it might be necessary to send a child home, eg if other children are endangered.

The Class Teacher will discuss difficulties in pedagogical meetings to seek support. In some cases, the support of an extra lesson might be beneficial or the referral to other specialists outside of the School.

#### RESOURCES

Enrolment Contract and Agreement of Placement  
Kindergarten Parent Handbook  
Teacher and Parent Meeting Record  
Incident Report Form

#### REVIEW

This policy will be reviewed annually.