



SUSPENSION, TRANSFER AND EXCLUSION PROCEDURE

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1. INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE

- 1.1. CEDP is committed to developing an educational and organisational culture based on mutual trust and respect that assists young people to recognise and develop their personal capabilities. This is based on the inherent dignity of the human person as the foundation of all Catholic social teaching and central to the ministry of Catholic education.
 - 1.2. Essential to this is the creation and maintenance of a respectful, safe and supportive learning environment that promotes student wellbeing and enables school communities to engage a diverse range of learners in an inclusive manner.
 - 1.3. As a Catholic community, we are committed to examining and challenging inequity in all its forms, including in the ways that we respond to challenging behaviours.
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2. GENERAL PRINCIPLES

- 2.1. Each school must have a student management and wellbeing framework within which they work.
- 2.2. As part of the student management and wellbeing framework, there will be some instances where a student's behaviour is such that, in the best interests of the student and/or the community, it is appropriate to suspend a student from the school for a period of time; or transfer the student to a different educational setting within the CEDP network of schools.
- 2.3. There may be some very rare instances where it is appropriate and necessary to exclude a student from CEDP schools. Exclusion will only be used once all other options have been exhausted.
- 2.4. Whilst exclusion of a student may arise from the student's behaviour (e.g., danger to others or chronic absenteeism), some exclusions may be the result of serious concerns about the partnership between parents/carers and CEDP or the inability of CEDP to meet the medical, psychological or educational needs of the student.

- 2.5. It is important to deal with all situations on a case by case basis taking into consideration the student's background, the impacts of disadvantage and any disability that the student lives with.
 - 2.6. The safety and wellbeing of students, parents and staff of CEDP are always paramount.
 - 2.7. Decisions regarding suspensions, transfer and exclusion require the acknowledgement and consideration of the health and safety of all members of the school community, as well as their educational, physical and emotional needs.
 - 2.8. The language and communication needs of the student's parents / carers must be established by the school and taken into consideration in all engagements: by phone, in person and in writing.
 - 2.9. CEDP will assist as appropriate should liaison or interpreter services be required.
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3. SCOPE

- 3.1. This procedure applies to all Catholic Education Diocese Parramatta schools.
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4. DEFINITIONS

Behaviour Team refers to the CEDP specialist team in the Wellbeing Directorate that supports schools in their management of complex student behaviours

CEDP refers to Catholic Education Diocese of Parramatta, both schools and central office.

CEO refers to the central office and its staff.

Exclusion refers to permanently removing the student from the school and excluding the student from enrolment in any other CEDP school.

Short suspension means an external suspension of between 1 and 5 days. This may also include partial days (e.g., a student is sent home early due to their behaviour)

In school suspension refers to temporarily removing a student from usual school activities but not removing the student from school grounds.

Long suspension means an external suspension of longer than 5 days that has been approved by the Director Wellbeing.

Pastoral absence means an agreement between the parents/carers and the school that a student should be absent from school (usually for less than 5 days) with leave for their own wellbeing.

Risk of Harm refers to the assessment made by professional staff that there is a reasonable concern that a student poses a significant risk to her/his own safety and/or the safety of the community.

Suspension refers to temporarily removing a student from their learning environment for a defined period of time.

Transfer means moving the student from one CEDP school to enrol in another CEDP school with the assistance of CEDP.

5. PURPOSE OF SUSPENSION

- 5.1. A Suspension from school is intended to:
 - manage risk of harm;
 - establish consequences for a student for misconduct or challenging behaviour;
 - provide an opportunity for further investigation of an incident, and
 - provide an opportunity to plan how best to support the student when they return.
- 5.2. Suspension allows a period of time when the school, parents/carers and the student can work together on the resolution of the problem that has led to the student's suspension.
- 5.3. Principals will generally suspend a student for a period of up to three (3) school days, but may suspend for up to five (5) days in response to more serious behaviours. Suspension can be either in school suspension (where a student is removed from their learning environment but still attends the school) or external, where a student is required to remain at home under the supervision of his or her parents/carer.
- 5.4. Suspensions of more than five (5) days will only be administered in consultation with the Director Wellbeing.
- 5.5. Suspension is not intended as a punishment. It is one strategy that can be used to manage inappropriate behaviour.

- 5.6. Suspensions must be used in accordance with the CEDP behaviour management processes and with the school's student management and wellbeing framework.
 - 5.7. Suspensions must be correctly documented in a formal letter to the parents / carers at the time of suspension, i.e. on the same day the student is instructed to remain away from school and the parents/carers are informed by phone.
 - 5.8. If necessary, the school will access translation services, a community liaison officer or a member of the Jarara Aboriginal Education team to ensure equitable and respectful access to these processes and meetings.
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6. IN SCHOOL SUSPENSION PRINCIPLES

There are a number of circumstances where an in school suspension may be warranted.

Principals will use their discretion based on consideration of student support needs, severity and seriousness of the behaviour and available school resources.

In school suspension must not impact access to learning by the suspended student
Students must have reasonable access to toilet facilities and alternative supervised meal breaks.

7. LONGER SUSPENSION PRINCIPLES (6 - 10 DAYS)

- 7.1. A Principal may recommend the application of a long suspension if a Short Suspension has not resolved the behaviour issue or if the misbehaviour is a serious incident to warrant a longer period where the student is removed from the school environment.
- 7.2. This recommendation is made to the Director Wellbeing.
- 7.3. Reasons for a long suspension may include:
 - 7.3.1. repeated serious misconduct;
 - 7.3.2. physical violence which has resulted in injury or which has seriously interfered with the safety or wellbeing of other students or staff;
 - 7.3.3. use or possession of a prohibited weapon, firearm or knife. (Please note, if a student has brought a weapon of any kind onto the school site or to a school

event, the CEDP Weapons Procedure must be followed and the police would be informed);

7.3.4. possession, supply or use of a suspected illegal substance, and

7.3.5. serious criminal behaviour related to the school. These circumstances must be discussed with the Director Wellbeing.

8. BEFORE IMPLEMENTING A SUSPENSION

8.1 Before suspending a student Principals must ensure:

8.1.1. all behaviour incidents have been fairly investigated and documented;

8.1.2. the student has had an opportunity to respond to the concerns raised, preferably in a written incident report;

8.1.3. appropriate personalised learning and behaviour plans and support strategies have been consulted, implemented and documented where appropriate;

8.1.4. school based supports and student services staff have been involved where necessary, and

8.1.5. the principal or their delegate has discussed the specific behaviour which the school considers unacceptable and which may lead to suspension with the student and their parents/carers.

8.2. There may be circumstances where an immediate suspension is warranted due to the severity and seriousness of the behaviour. Principals will use their discretion in relation to student behaviour that warrants an immediate short suspension. All other processes must be followed and, at least, a phone discussion with the parents / carers must take place prior to the student leaving the school. This will then be followed by written notice of the suspension.

8.3. The principles of procedural fairness must always be applied.

9. SHORT SUSPENSION PROCESS

9.1. The student must be interviewed prior to making the decision to impose a short suspension. Principals must ensure that the student is given information about the behaviour of concern or the nature of allegation(s), and given an opportunity to respond.

- 9.2. Following investigation of the incident, the Principal or their delegate must inform the student of the decision to impose a short suspension, including the start and end date of the suspension and the reason for the suspension.
 - 9.3. Parents/carers must be verbally notified of the decision to impose a short suspension, including the start and end date of the suspension.
 - 9.4. Parents / carers must be provided with written notification of the suspension on the day the suspension is applied.
 - 9.5. The suspension letter must include:
 - 9.5.1. the details of the student;
 - 9.5.2. the reason for the suspension;
 - 9.5.3. the length of the suspension and the return to school date;
 - 9.5.4. any instructions for a return to school meeting with school leadership;
 - 9.5.5. directions for parents / carers to locate this Suspension, Transfer and Exclusion Procedure on the school's website, and
 - 9.5.6. a reminder that the parents / carers are responsible for the student's supervision and safety during the suspension.
 - 9.6. Provision must be made for the student to continue his or her learning during the suspension.
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10. LONGER SUSPENSION PROCESS

- 10.1. When imposing a longer suspension, Principals must follow the steps outlined in Section 8 of this Procedure.
- 10.2. There may be exceptional circumstances where a longer suspension is warranted even if a short suspension has not been previously imposed. These circumstances include serious physical violence, use or possession of a weapon or possession, supply or use of a suspected illegal substance(s). These circumstances must be discussed with and approved by the Director Wellbeing.

- 10.3. The student must have had the opportunity and appropriate support to follow any behaviour management plans agreed to previously.
 - 10.4. Principals must gain the approval of the Director Wellbeing for longer suspensions and forward a copy of the suspension letter to both the Director Wellbeing and Head Student Services.
 - 10.5. Director Wellbeing will consider the reason for and context of the longer suspension and provide an outcome to the request in writing to the principal.
 - 10.6. The student's absence is recorded in the roll using the 'E' code.
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11. RE-ENTRY FOLLOWING A SUSPENSION

- 11.1. A return to school meeting is an important means by which the school can reinforce behaviour expectations and explain the management plan. It also builds the partnership between the school and the parents/carers and offers the student an opportunity to express remorse and their reflection on their learning.
 - 11.2. Upon the end of the suspension period, the Principal or delegate conducts an interview with the student with their parent/carer(s) present.
 - 11.3. Where a parent/carer is not available within a reasonable period of time the Principal may make the decision to meet with the student separately and contact the parents/carers later.
 - 11.4. A Principal or their delegate will develop a management plan prior to convening the re-entry interview. The student and their parents/carers will be asked to agree to this management plan before the student's re-entry into school.
 - 11.5. Records of the re-entry and management plan must be maintained by the schools by appending the correspondence to the Compass suspension chronicle entry previously created.
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12. PASTORAL ABSENCE OF STUDENTS

- 12.1. By the mutual consent of the Principal and a student's parents/caregivers, a student may be asked to remain away from school for two or three days due to pastoral reasons.
- 12.2. Students asked to remain at home for pastoral reasons should be recorded on the roll as absent on 'approved leave - Code L' and the reason for the absence noted.

- 12.3. If an assessment is made that the school cannot adequately assure the student's safety and wellbeing at school (for example, due to persistent and serious self-harm) the principal may insist that the parent/carer keep the student away from school in order to source appropriate professional care. Depending on the circumstances, this may be entered into the roll as sick leave 'S' or pastoral leave 'L'.
 - 12.4. For duty of care purposes, schools need to be able to demonstrate that parents are aware of this arrangement, as it will generally be included in a Behaviour Management Plan.
 - 12.5. It must be made clear to the student and parent/carer that this absence is not a behavioural sanction or punishment.
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13. PRINCIPLES OF TRANSFER

- 13.1. A transfer may be considered by the Principal in consultation with the Head Student Services and Director Wellbeing.
 - 13.2. Only the Director Wellbeing can approve a transfer of a student.
 - 13.3. The transfer should give the student the best possible chance of success at an alternative CEDP school.
 - 13.4. The student and his/her parents/carers will be consulted on appropriate alternative school settings wherever possible.
 - 13.5. A student and his/her parents/carers who reject the offer of an alternate school placement may forfeit the right to a place in any school in CEDP. This is at the sole discretion of the Director Wellbeing.
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14. PRINCIPLES FOR A STUDENT TRANSFER

- 14.1. The transfer of a student will only be considered where:
 - 14.1.1. current school strategies and interventions have been exhausted;
 - 14.1.2. there is insufficient progress and continued enrolment at the school is not in the best interests of the student, and

- 14.1.3. the continued enrolment compromises the school's ability to provide a safe and supportive learning environment for all students.
 - 14.2. When recommending a transfer for a student, the Principal must ensure:
 - 14.2.1. the issues have been discussed with both the student and their parents/carers;
 - 14.2.2. alternative options have been explored;
 - 14.2.3. a behaviour management plan is in place for the student and the student has been given the appropriate support and opportunities to comply with the plan;
 - 14.2.4. the Behaviour Team has been consulted and they have given support to the student, and
 - 14.2.5. the Head Student Services has been consulted.
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15. STUDENT TRANSFER PROCESS

- 15.1. Before a Transfer is imposed, the Head Student Services or delegate and the Principal will work collaboratively with the student and their parents/carers to find an alternative education setting for the student.
- 15.2. The parents/carers will be notified in writing that a Transfer is being considered for their child.
- 15.3. In recommending an alternative education setting within CEDP, the Head Student Services will consider other schools or educational settings in CEDP that might better meet the student's specific needs.
- 15.4. The Principal and the Head Student Services will work collaboratively with the receiving Principal to share information and assist the transition process. The receiving Principal will consult with the Head Student Services on resolving any issues foreseen in relation to the transfer of a student.
- 15.5. Only the Director Wellbeing can approve the Transfer and this option will be presented to the student and their parents/carers in writing. The final decision to Transfer the student will be documented.
- 15.6. If a student or their parents/carers reject the offer of the Transfer, the student may forfeit the right to a place in any school in CEDP.

- 15.7. A review process considering the circumstances leading to the student's Transfer and the processes undertaken by the school will be conducted after the Transfer in conjunction with CEO Student Services team.
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16. EXCLUSION PRINCIPLES

- 16.1. Only the Executive Director can approve the exclusion of a student from the CEDP system of schools.
- 16.2. In serious circumstances of misbehaviour the Principal may recommend excluding a student from their school. Such circumstances include, but are not limited to the following:
- 16.2.1. in extreme circumstances where the student's behaviour represents a significant risk of harm to other students, teachers or the school community;
 - 16.2.2. if a student has significant attendance issues and efforts to re-engage the student have been unsuccessful. This would include more than 12 months of chronic absenteeism with ongoing support and intervention from the Attendance Team;
 - 16.2.3. if there is a significant breach in the enrolment contract between the school and the parents/carers. This could include an inability to resolve a significant dispute between the parents/carers and the school or where the school cannot fulfil their duty of care and educational requirements. A student will be given all possible school based and system support before an exclusion is recommended to the Executive Director.
- 16.3. Due to the gravity of the circumstances that exist when consideration is being given to an exclusion, particular emphasis will be given to providing a reasonable opportunity for the student and parents/carers to respond to the proposed action.
- 16.4. Students that have been excluded from a particular school for misbehaviour may not re- enrol in a CEDP school without the approval of the Executive Director.
- 16.5. An exclusion can be reviewed at the discretion of the Executive Director.
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17. EXCLUSION PROCESS

- 17.1. When considering a recommendation of Exclusion, the Principal must consult and involve the Head Student Services and the Director Wellbeing.
- 17.2. The Principal must:
 - 17.2.1. notify the parents/carers in writing that Exclusion from CEDP is being considered, giving reasons for the possible course of action, and including sufficient documentation for a clear understanding of the issues;
 - 17.2.2. provide an opportunity for parents/carers to meet with the Principal and Head Student Services or delegate to discuss the issue/s and respond. Generally, up to five (5) working days should be allowed for parents to attend this meeting, or to respond in writing, to the proposed Exclusion;
 - 17.2.3. consider the responses of the parents/carers and the student (where applicable) as part of the decision making process;
 - 17.2.4. provide an opportunity for a further meeting between parties, if requested;
 - 17.2.5. ensure the CEDP Procedural Fairness Guidelines are followed, and
 - 17.2.6. notify the parish priest to provide an opportunity for his pastoral contribution to the discernment process.
- 17.3. The Principal must formally recommend an Exclusion to the Head Student Services and Director Wellbeing in writing, with all relevant documentation attached.
- 17.4. After receiving formal notification of a recommendation for exclusion, the Director Wellbeing or their delegate will give regard to the reasons for this possible course of action, any previous action taken, and the substance of any response from the parents/carers and student.
- 17.5. If the Director Wellbeing agrees with the recommendation, the Director Wellbeing will advise the Executive Director in writing of the recommendation to exclude.
- 17.6. The Executive Director will approve an exclusion be imposed after receiving formal notification of approval of the Exclusion from the Director Wellbeing.
- 17.7. The Principal and the Director Wellbeing will advise parents/carers in writing of the decision to exclude which will include the reasons for this possible course of action, any previous action taken, and the substance of any response from the parents/carers and student.
- 17.8. The formal notification will also include the appropriate procedures for submitting a formal review of the decision.

- 17.9. The Wellbeing Directorate will give assistance to the students and their parents/carers to find a placement in an alternative educational setting, if this is requested.
- 17.10. The Principal will inform the Department of Education of the student's new educational setting, or 'Destination Unknown' if this cannot be identified.
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18. RELATED DOCUMENTS

- Procedural Fairness Guidelines
 - Suspension, Transfer and Exclusion Guidelines (Public Document)
 - Complaints and Grievances Procedures
 - Student Wellbeing Policy
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19. FURTHER INFORMATION

Further information on this policy can be directed to the Enterprise Service Desk on (02) 9840 5620 or via email esd@parra.catholic.edu.au (internal) or the Community Liaison Unit on (02) 9840 5796 (external).

Complex matters should be discussed with the relevant Director.
