

St Thomas The Apostle Primary School	Updated: 5. 5. 2016	
Behaviour Management Policy	Next Review: 5. 5. 2019	

Behaviour Management Policy

Introduction

At St Thomas the Apostle behaviour management is consistent with a distinctive, Catholic expression of the pastoral care of students. Pastoral care at the school affirms the belief that each person is created in the image and likeness of God (*Genesis 1:27*). From this belief in the inherent dignity of the human person follows an understanding of pastoral care that emphasises love, respect, compassion, tolerance, forgiveness, repentance, reconciliation and justice.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to set out a comprehensive, whole-of-school approach to managing students' behaviour that ensures the safety of students, staff and parents, encourages students to take responsibility for their actions, and supports the learning of all students.

Scope

This policy applies to all full and part time staff members, casual relief teachers, contractors and others engaged by the school to conduct work.

Related Policies

This policy is to be read within the context of the following Catholic Education Office of Melbourne (CEOM) policies and guidelines:

- (Policy 2.26) *Pastoral Care of Students in Catholic Schools*
- *Guidelines for Student Behaviour Management*

Guiding Principles

Student behaviour management at St Thomas the Apostle:

- is a whole-of-school responsibility
- supports orderly and respectful classrooms in which learning is maximised
- follows Restorative Practices
- is preventative as well as reactive
- accepts that students will make mistakes and can learn from them
- emphasises inclusion over exclusion.
- Corporal punishment is not used at St Thomas the Apostle.

School Rules and Values

School Rules set the minimum expectations for student behaviour at St Thomas the Apostle. Framed in positive language, the rules focus students' attention on what they should be doing, not what they shouldn't be. The school rules are:

- Respect each other.
- Follow directions.
- Hands off! Feet off!
- Be positive. No put-downs.
- Be safe, play safe.

Appropriate behaviour is further reinforced by five school values:

- Respect
- Responsibility
- Honesty
- Doing Your Best
- Fair Go

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Restorative Practices

Restorative Practices underpin the school's preventative and inclusive approach to student behaviour management. They recognise that positive relationships are a pre-condition for learning in a school environment. When relationships between students or between students and staff break down, dialogue, forgiveness and healing are required to restore them. Restorative Practices focus on making students aware of the impact their behaviour has on others through personal accountability and conflict resolution.

Restorative Practice Principles

- *Foster empathy.* Make students aware of how their actions affect others.
- *Avoid lecturing.* This often results in the student reacting defensively. It distracts from noticing other people's feelings.
- *Actively involve the student.* Rather than simply punishing the student, a restorative intervention encourages the student to speak. They face and listen to those who have been affected by their inappropriate behaviour. They help decide how to repair the harm and make a commitment to this.
- *Accept ambiguity.* Often fault is unclear and people can agree to accept the ambiguous situation. Separate the deed from the doer. We recognise a student's worth, his/her virtues and accomplishments while disapproving of his/her inappropriate behaviour.

Positive Behaviour Management

Student behaviour management at St Thomas the Apostle aims to prevent incidents of inappropriate or wrongful behaviour from occurring in the first place by acknowledging and reinforcing appropriate behaviour.

Whole-School Procedures for Reinforcing Appropriate Behaviour

Gold Awards

Gold Awards are awarded by teachers to students who "astound" them. That is, they make them go "WOW" or "AHA". The student may have provided an exceptional example of our school values or have reached a given target that has been worked towards a period of time (eg. reaching 10 stars in a classroom reward system).

Students that receive 5 Gold Awards are eligible for a Pin, which is presented at the office and recognised at a whole-school assembly.

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Principal Awards

Principal Awards recognise students for setting out to achieve a classroom focus, demonstrating effort towards accomplishing a personal goal, or demonstrating our school values consistently.

Star in the Yard

Students are given a star for displaying our school values outside the classroom setting or following a whole-school focus presented by school captains at assembly. The recipient gives it to a peer mediator on duty who records the reason and puts it in the Star on the Yard box.

Each fortnight the school captains discuss and select two recipients who have, in their opinion, been the strongest examples of the school values and/or school focus. These two students are presented with the Star in the Yard award at assembly.

Other awards that are currently given across the school include an Environmental Award, Discovery Centre Award, and Meditation Awards (individual and class).

Playground Support Program

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This program brings together junior and middle school students who experience difficulty behaving appropriately on the playground with positive Year 5/6 role models. At the beginning of lunch and snack recess, the younger students meet with their older peers, who help them find a positive activity for the remainder of the recess period. They are encouraged to seek out the older students any time they need reassurance.

Classroom Procedures for Reinforcing Appropriate Behaviour

Classroom Rules

Each class will negotiate a set of classroom rules that directly reflect the school rules and values. Examples of classroom rules include:

- Follow instructions the first time.
- Listen to others.
- Respect the property of others.
- Put your hand up before speaking.
- Use appropriate language.
- We keep our hands and feet to ourselves.
- When working, speak quietly.

Classroom teachers reinforce appropriate behaviours in a variety of ways, including through:

- verbal praise and recognition
- stickers
- awards
- individual and table points
- free time
- a special activity
- note/phone call to parent(s)/guardian(s)

Restorative Practices Dialogue

Restorative dialogue should follow all incidents of inappropriate behaviour. Teacher are encouraged to ask students the following questions:

- What happened?
- What were you thinking at the time?
- What have you thought about since?
- Who has been affected by what you did?
- In what way have they been affected?
- What do you need to do to make things right?
- What did you think when you realised what happened?
- What impact has this incident had on you and others?
- What has been the hardest thing for you?
- What do you think needs to happen to make things right?

Every teacher carries a copy of these questions in the first aid bag they carry while on yard duty.

Procedures for Minor Incidents of Inappropriate Behaviour

If a minor incident occurs in the classroom or on the playground, the teacher will engage the students involved in restorative dialogue (see above) aimed at restoring relationships that have been harmed.

Minor incidents of inappropriate behaviour can include:

- disagreements
- mild and “accidental” inappropriate language
- name-calling
- playing in out-of-bounds areas

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- conflicts causing slight distress
- disrupting learning.

Dialogue should lead to an agreement between the teacher and student(s) on the restorative action that should take place.

Repeated Minor Incidents

If a student repeats an inappropriate behaviour, the teacher may pursue a formal response. This involves having students complete a “Thinking about My Behaviour” pro forma on which they analyse and reflect on their behaviour and its impact on others. The completed pro forma should be the basis for further restorative dialogue.

The pro forma should also be taken home by the student for discussion with parent(s)/guardian(s). It is then signed by the parent(s)/guardian(s) and returned to school. The student’s classroom teacher keeps the pro forma as a record of the inappropriate behaviour and restorative actions agreed .

If a student is required to complete three “Thinking about My Behaviour” pro formas in a term, parents will be contacted to take part in a formal conference with their teacher and a member of the school leadership team.

Procedures for Major Incidents of Inappropriate Behaviour

If a major incident occurs in the classroom or on the playground, the students involved are to be sent to the school office where the incident can be followed-up by the Principal, Deputy Principal or Student Services Coordinator.

Major incidents of inappropriate behaviour can include:

- endangering the safety of others
- misusing property
- defying staff
- leaving the school grounds
- deliberate physical or verbal aggression
- inappropriate communication with others
- bullying (defined as repeated action that causes harm to another individual).

Follow-up should include restorative dialogue between the Principal (or Deputy Principal or Student Services Coordinator) student(s) and, where possible, the teacher present at the incident, aimed at restoring relationships that have been harmed and reaching agreement on the restorative action that should take place. Student(s) should complete a “Thinking about My Behaviour” pro forma on which they analyse and reflect on their behaviour and its impact on others.

The completed pro forma should also be taken home by the student for discussion with parent(s)/guardian(s). It is then signed by the parent(s)/guardian(s) and returned to school. The student’s classroom teacher keeps the pro forma as a record of the inappropriate behaviour and restorative actions agreed .

If a student is required to complete three “Thinking about My Behaviour” pro formas in a term, parents will be asked to take part in a formal conference with their teacher and a member of the school leadership team.

Depending on the nature of the incident, the Principal may also decide to contact the student’s parent(s)/guardian(s) directly to discuss the incident and agreed restorative actions.

If the level of harm caused by the student warrants further management, or the incident is part of a pattern of major, inappropriate behaviour, the Principal may pursue one of the following management procedures:

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Behaviour Management Plan

A Behaviour Management Plan addresses individual students' behaviour management needs. It is an agreement reached formally between the school, a student, and the student's parent(s)/guardian(s) (supported by authoritative advice, if and when required, in relation to the student's medical or mental health needs) about the future behaviour of the student and its management.

The following matters need to be considered and written into a Behaviour Management Plan:

- the positive, formative purpose of the plan
- duration of the plan
- expectations regarding the student's future behaviour
- means by which the student will be supported in achieving this behaviour
- means by which the student's behaviour will be monitored and managed
- circumstances which could require the plan to be amended or reviewed (eg medical or mental health advice)
- arrangements to apply following a satisfactory conclusion of the plan
- arrangements to apply if the student's behaviour is not in accord with the plan's stated expectations

The Behaviour Management Plan will be recorded in writing, signed by the parties involved, and dated.

In-school Withdrawal

If judged necessary as a behaviour management procedure, withdrawal from class, the playground and/or other school activities will be done in-school rather than out-of-school, as this maintains a student's connectedness and engagement with the school. The processes for the withdrawal of the student will be 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.

Out-of-school Suspension

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

The parent(s)/guardian(s) will 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.

It is an expectation of the school and the CEOM that a student shall not be suspended for a total of more than nine school days in any one school year.

Procedures for Student Wrongful Behaviour of a Serious Nature

St Thomas the Apostle defines student wrongful behaviour of a serious nature to be an activity or behaviour of a student that:

- seriously undermines the ethos of the school; and/or

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- consistently and deliberately fails to comply with any lawful order of the Principal or a 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, and sexual assault. This list is indicative only and not all-inclusive. When the Principal determines that a serious offence of a criminal nature has occurred, the welfare needs of the offending student(s) is paramount. The incident will be reported to the police at the earliest opportunity.

Behaviour Management Support Group

When it is judged by the school that a student has engaged in wrongful behaviour of a serious nature within the school community, a Behaviour Management Support Group will 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 will be honoured at all times.

A Behaviour Management Support Group will comprise:

- the principal or his/her nominee as convenor and chairperson
- the student
- the parent(s) or guardian(s) of the student, who may be accompanied by a support person (not acting for fee or reward) nominated by the parent(s)/guardian(s)
- the classroom teacher
- (optional) a specialist person who may be of assistance, for example, a student counsellor.

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 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.

Negotiated Transfer

Negotiated Transfer involves a change of school by a student to another Catholic school, a school within another sector, or an alternative educational setting.

Negotiated Transfer is an option in circumstances in which it is judged that the school is not the right environment for the student, and that another setting would more suitably meet the student's current and future needs and be the most appropriate means of providing for the student's wellbeing. It may also be that, due to serious behavioural issues, a student's Negotiated Transfer is an appropriate means of providing for the wellbeing of the school community.

When Negotiated Transfer is being offered, the Principal (or Principal's nominee) will provide comprehensive

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advice to the student and the student's parents about the benefits this option would provide, and seek their agreement for a Negotiated Transfer.

Responsibility for negotiating a transfer is with the Principal (or Principal's nominee) of the school from which the student is to transfer. The following matters need to be considered:

- the environment which would best provide for the student's emotional, social and spiritual needs
- the school which would provide an educational program suitable to the student's needs, abilities and aspirations
- the process by which the transfer is to be negotiated
- the support required by the student and parent(s)/guardian(s) in making the transition.

These and other relevant matters will be included in the formal record of Negotiated Transfer. If a Negotiated Transfer is desired but cannot be arranged, the Executive Director of Catholic Education will be informed in writing, and assistance requested. If a Negotiated Transfer is still unable to be achieved, the student will remain enrolled at St Thomas the Apostle, unless the circumstances are such as to require expulsion.

Expulsion

Expulsion of a student 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 for the intended expulsion, and provide them with an opportunity to speak on behalf of the student
- provide to the parish priest formal written notification of the intended expulsion and the reasons for it and seek endorsement
- 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.

Should the decision to expel the student be confirmed, the Principal will 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 will 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 will include:

- the reason(s) for the expulsion
- the commencement date of the expulsion
- details of the Review and/or Appeal processes available.

Process for Review of an Expulsion Decision

The parent(s)/guardian(s) of a student expelled the school may, within five school days (in exceptional circumstances, ten school days) of receipt of the notice of expulsion, formally request of the Principal that the decision be reviewed. The request must be in writing unless that is not possible, and must state the grounds on which the Review is being sought, whether the student and parent(s)/guardian(s) wish to be heard in person, and if they wish to be accompanied at the Review by another person (such a person to be named, and not acting for

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fee or reward).

Valid grounds for requesting a Review are that:

- proper procedures were not followed by the school in matters related to the expulsion decision, and/or
- the full details of the case were not considered at the time (additional details to be provided); and/or
- the decision was too severe; and/or
- the decision was unjust.

An Expulsion Review Panel, convened by the Principal, will hold the review, within five school days if possible. Membership of the panel will be the Principal as non-voting chair and three persons nominated by the Principal, who were not involved in the original decision and who have school leadership responsibility. The panel will consider the details of the case and, after giving the student and parent(s)/guardian(s) the opportunity to be heard on the grounds of review, determine by majority vote a recommendation to the principal as to whether the expulsion should remain or be repealed.

Having considered the recommendation, the principal will make a decision, and within three school days will formally notify this decision to the person(s) who requested the review and to the Executive Director of Catholic Education.

Process for Appeal against an Expulsion Review Decision

After the Review Process has been concluded, if the expulsion decision is still in place the parent(s)/guardian(s) may appeal against that decision. The parent(s)/guardian(s) may, within five school days (in exceptional circumstances, ten school days) of receipt of the Review decision, lodge a formal Appeal.

Valid grounds for requesting an Appeal are that:

- proper procedures were not followed in the Review process, and/or
- the decision to continue the expulsion was unjust.

The Appeal must be in writing to the Executive Director of Catholic Education. Upon receipt of an Appeal notice, this authority will appoint an officer to investigate the Appeal. When the investigation has been completed, the Officer will deliver their findings to the Executive Director of Catholic Education, who will formally notify the Principal and the person(s) who made the Appeal. If the grounds on which the Appeal was made are found to be true, the expulsion must be repealed. Otherwise, the expulsion will remain.

Following receipt of these findings, the Principal will formally notify all parties to the Appeal as to whether the expulsion decision remains or is repealed, and the reason(s) for the decision. This decision will be final, and is not subject to further Review or Appeal within the Catholic Education system.

Pro forma documentation

The following sample templates are available via the Catholic Education Victoria Network website:

- Behaviour Management Plan
- letter regarding suspension
- Behaviour Management Support Group report
- Record of Negotiated Transfer (for the school file)
- Notification of Expulsion to the Executive Director of Catholic Education (prior to confirming expulsion)
Record of Expulsion (for the school file)
- letter to parent(s)/guardian(s) regarding Notification of Expulsion
- letter from a principal regarding the Expulsion Review outcome
- letter from a principal regarding the Expulsion Appeal outcome.