



PROCEDURE: Suspension

1. PURPOSE

The purpose of this procedure is to describe St Mary's College standards for managing the suspension of students, as a sanction under BCE's Student Behaviour Support policy and as used in school Student Behaviour Support plans.

This procedure must be read in conjunction with: Student Behaviour Support policy; Student Diversity and Inclusion policy; Student Protection policy; Detention procedure; Exclusion procedure; Student, Parent and Guardian Complaints Management procedure, and Catholic Education Archdiocese of Brisbane Code of Conduct.

2. RESPONSIBILITIES

2.1 General requirements

The College Student Behaviour Support Plan details the College's suspension processes and makes clear that a discussion with the parent is a normal part of the process for suspension and return to school process, and it is expected that a parent or guardian will participate.

Suspension is imposed as a disciplinary measure, and in some cases is implemented to ensure the safety of other students and staff.

Suspensions must be recorded in the Engage Student Support System Suspension Register.

2.2 Roles and responsibilities

Role	Responsibilities
Principal	<ul style="list-style-type: none">ensure the school's student suspension and return to school processes are documented in the school Student Behaviour Support Planensure information on the school's approach to and use of suspension for students is made available to students, parents and guardians e.g. parent portalrespond to appeals for suspensions under three (3) days durationmanage complaints about student suspensions under the Student, Parent and Guardian Complaints Management procedure.
Senior Leader – School Progress and Performance (BCE)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">respond to appeals for suspensions over three days in length.
Staff BCE	<ul style="list-style-type: none">ensure use of student suspensions is consistent with the school's processes as detailed in the school Student Behaviour Support Planrecord suspensions in the Engage Student Support System Suspensions Register.

3. PROCEDURE

3.1 When to use suspension

The purpose of suspension is to:

- signal that the student's unproductive behaviour is not acceptable
- allow a cooling-off period and time to seek additional resources, and develop a plan for assisting the student to demonstrate more productive behaviours
- allow time to negotiate some goals that the student will work towards, with support, on their return to school
- ensure that the student's family are aware of the student's unproductive behaviour that led to the suspension and are involved in the process of the student returning to school.

Suspension may occur, if decided by the Principal, after they have:

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- ensured that other appropriate and available student support strategies and response options have been applied and documented
- ensured that appropriate support personnel, both within the school and externally, are involved
- taken reasonable steps to ensure that discussion appropriate to the circumstances has occurred with the student and/or family regarding the unproductive behaviour which led to the suspension
- recorded all action taken in the Engage Student Support System Suspension Register.

3.2 Grounds for suspending a student A

Principal may suspend a student for:

- persistent non-compliance: students, who in their relationships with staff, are persistently disobedient, insolent or engage in verbal harassment and abuse
- persistent disruption: students who persistently disrupt and prevent the learning and teaching of others
- breach of the school's Student Behaviour Support Plan • students who seriously break school rules.

Suspension must not to be used as a response to poor attendance.

3.3. Accountability requirements

Processes associated with suspension are often subject to scrutiny. It is therefore important that all processes are carried out in a way that conforms, with accuracy and attention to the following:

- a suspension record is to be completed in the Engage Student Support System Suspension Register for each student suspended
- in the Engage Student Support System there are different types of suspensions recorded: 1 to 2-day suspensions, 3 to 10-day suspensions and suspensions of more than 10 days. Where it is a suspension of less than 1 day, a note in the Engage Student Support System will suffice
- any single suspension cannot exceed 10 school days without being referred to the Head of School Progress and Performance, through the Senior Leader – School Progress and Performance (BCE)
- suspension can be part-time, in which event the student is not permitted to attend school for certain times of the day or certain days of the school week. Part-time suspension should not span more than 10 school days in total
- it is recommended that schools provide appropriate schoolwork for the duration of the suspension
- by mutually agreeable arrangements, a student who is suspended may attend an alternative education program
- indefinite suspension, where the student is continually re-suspended is not acceptable.

3.4 Immediate suspension

In some circumstances, the Principal may determine that a student should be suspended immediately. This will usually be due to reasons such as the safety of students or employees because of violence, threats of violence, or the presence of weapons, knives, or illegal drugs. Principals may immediately suspend any student whose behaviour includes (but is not limited to):

- possession of alcohol or a suspected illegal drug: schools must be places that are free of illegal drugs. Suspension may occur immediately if the student alleges the substance to be an illegal drug or alcohol or it is confirmed as illegal. The matter is to be referred to the police
- violence or threat of serious physical violence: any student intentionally causing injury or threatening serious physical violence against another student or member of the school community, or themselves, may be suspended immediately. The matter should also be reported in accordance with BCE's Student Protection Processes
- concerning or serious sexual behaviour: the matter is to be reported in accordance with Student Protection Processes
- possession of a weapon or knife: any student possessing a weapon or using or threatening to use any item or instrument as a weapon may be suspended immediately. The matter must be reported to the police
- verbal abuse: Principals must take developmentally appropriate expectations into account in relation to verbal abuse by a student.

3.5 Communication

Suspension decision

A member of the College Leadership Team must inform the student and family of the grounds on which the decision to suspend has been made. The student and family will then be given the opportunity to respond. The conditions relating to the suspension should be discussed with the family, and their responses taken into consideration. Some situations may require discussions about continued access for the suspended student to attend school-based activities, such as apprenticeships or traineeships.

Notification to families for a day or more suspension options

A student may not be sent out of school before the end of the school day without the family being notified, and, if necessary, agreement reached about arrangements for collecting the student from school. The notification must be delivered by a safe method to ensure delivery.

Notification can take place by phone to a member of the family, who must also be notified of the suspension, using the suspension letter generated in the Engage Student Support System, within a reasonable time.

Notification can take place by email to alert the family to the suspension if the phone call has been unsuccessful. The family must also be notified of the suspension letter generated in the Engage Student Support System, within a reasonable time.

In all cases, the written suspension notification must:

- indicate the reasons for the suspension
- advise the length of the suspension, the start date and time, the expected return date
- outline the responsibility of the family for the care and safety of the student who is under suspension, and the expectation that the student will continue with their own studies while suspended and away from the school
- indicate the importance of the family working cooperatively with the school in resolving the matter
- request a discussion with the student and their family

- refer families to the school's published Student Behaviour Support Plan
- include details of the right to appeal of the student and family as outlined below.

While a student is suspended from school (out-of-school suspension), families have responsibility for their child. Families need to know that their child may not attend school or school-related functions. Families have a responsibility to provide appropriate supervision. In a situation where families refuse to accept responsibility for their child during suspension (for example, by continuing to send the child to school), the Principal is to inform the Senior Leader – School Progress and Performance.

3.5 Engage Student Support System

All suspensions that are a full day or longer must be documented in the ESSS Suspension Register. As soon as is practical after a suspension takes place, the Principal will ensure that a full report is written on the background and reasons for suspension, with the period of suspension clearly specified.

The Engage Student Support System facilitates this process by:

- producing a letter to the family and/or student that fulfils the above requirements
- notifying Guidance Counsellors, Senior Leaders and/or Heads as appropriate. The Principal may ask the Senior Leader and/or Guidance Counsellor for assistance in the return to school process.

3.7 Return to school

As part of the return to school process, the Principal or authorised delegate will organise a conversation with the student and/or the family to discuss the basis of maximising successful reintegration into the school, before the student returns to school. The aims of this conversation are to:

- ensure that the student and the family understand the student's unproductive behaviour and the need for the formal sanction
- encourage a mutually supportive position between the school, the student, and the student's family for the response that the school is taking
- outline the return to school plan, goals, and follow-up evaluation for the student's return to school.

It is recommended that the return to school meeting should be before the student's return to school date, and will usually take place in the school, facilitated by the Principal. In circumstances where a family member is unable to attend the school in person, a telephone conference is adequate. In instances where there has been a problematic relationship between the family and the school, the Principal may find it beneficial to call upon a third party such as the Senior Leader - School Progress and Performance or Guidance Counsellor, to facilitate the meeting.

If, despite the school's requests, families are unwilling to attend a return to school meeting, the Principal should refer the matter to the Senior Leader - School Progress and Performance.

Alternative options may need to be considered to facilitate the student's return to school.

Alternatively, the Principal, together with the Senior Leader - School Progress and Performance, and in consultation with the Head of School Progress and Performance, may consider further options.

Students attending special programs, such as school-based apprenticeships or training, are not automatically precluded from attending their program if they are suspended. The school, the family, and the training provider will determine this. The determination should occur before the student is next due to attend the program.

3.8 Appeals

As part of the suspension procedure the family has the right to respond to or appeal a suspension. Any response or appeal must be submitted in writing. Appeals for suspensions for less than 3 days should be directed to the Principal. For suspensions more than three (3) days the appeal should be directed to the Senior Leader - School Progress and Performance.

The Principal or Senior Leader - School Progress and Performance, gathers any additional information to respond to the appeal and allows the student/family to consider this information and to provide a response.

The Principal or Senior Leader - School Progress and Performance then confirms, varies, or sets aside the decision to suspend the student following consideration of the appeal. The Principal or Senior Leader must securely retain relevant documentation as a confidential record for seven (7) years after the suspension.

3.9 Complaints

Complaints about student suspension, including school decisions and processes, must be managed by the school under the Student, Parent and Guardian Complaints Management procedure.

4. PERFORMANCE

Compliance management and monitoring responsibilities are as follows:

Role	Compliance responsibilities
PEO – Inclusive Education and Student Wellbeing, Learning Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> monitor school use of Engage to record student suspensions.

5. REFERENCES AND DEFINITIONS

5.1 References

- Child and Youth Risk Management Strategy
- Code of Conduct
- Disability Discrimination Act 1992
- Education (General Provisions) Act 2006 Qld
- Anti-Discrimination Act 1991 Qld
- Detention procedure
- Exclusion procedure
- Negotiated Change of School procedure
- Student Behaviour Support policy
- Student Diversity and Inclusion policy
- Student Protection policy
- Student Protection Processes
- Student Wellbeing policy.

5.2 Definition

Suspension	Suspension is the temporary, full-time, or part-time withdrawal of a student from the school and/or school related functions for a defined period. Suspensions can be conducted as an in-school suspension or an out-of-school suspension
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