



# Suspension Procedure

## 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.

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 are recorded in in our System Suspension Register.

### 2.2 Roles and responsibilities

Principal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• approve all suspensions between (1) and (5) days</li> <li>• ensure the school's student suspension and return to school processes are documented in the school SBS Plan</li> <li>• ensure information on the school's approach to and use of suspension for students is made available to students, parents and legal guardians e.g., parent portal</li> <li>• manage the response to appeals that may be received for suspensions for (1) to (5) days duration</li> <li>• for suspensions between (6) and 10 days, consult with the Senior Leader – School Progress and Performance prior to approval</li> <li>• for suspensions more than 10 days, consult with the Head School Progress and Performance through the Senior Leader – School Progress and Performance.</li> </ul>
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Principal (or delegated member of the leadership team)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ensure use of student suspensions is consistent with the school's processes as detailed in the school SBS Plan</li> <li>record suspensions in the Engage Student Support System Suspensions Register.</li> </ul>
Senior Leader – School Progress and Performance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>respond to appeals for suspensions of (6) days or more for</li> <li>suspensions between (6) and 10 days, inform the Head of School Progress and Performance</li> <li>monitor school use of suspensions as a formal sanction.</li> </ul>
Head School Progress and Performance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>for suspensions more than 10 days, inform the Learning Services Executive.</li> </ul>
School employees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ensure use of student suspensions is consistent with the school's processes as detailed in the school SBS Plan and this procedure</li> <li>record suspensions in the Engage Student Support System Suspensions Register as delegated.</li> </ul>

### 3. PROCEDURE

#### 3.1 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
- suspension is imposed as a disciplinary measure, and in some cases is implemented to ensure the safety of the student, other students, and employees
- ensure that the student's family are aware of the student's unproductive behaviour that led to the suspension and is involved in the process of the student returning to school.

#### 3.2 Grounds for suspending a student

A Principal may suspend a student for:

- persistent non-compliance: students, who in their relationships with employees and/or others in the community, are persistently disobedient, disrespectful or engage in verbal, physical or online harassment and abuse
- persistent disruption: students who persistently disrupt and prevent the learning and teaching of other students
- serious breach of the school Student Behaviour Support Plan

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- possession of alcohol or a suspected illegal drug
- violence or threat of serious physical violence
- concerning or serious sexual behaviour
- possession of a weapon or knife
- verbal abuse.

### **3.3 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 will 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 will be reported to the police.
- verbal abuse: the Principal will take developmentally appropriate expectations into account in relation to verbal abuse by a student.

### **3.4 Communication**

#### **Suspension decision**

- Appropriate investigation and conversations with relevant parties determines a suspension is recommended,
- Communication with the Principal around this recommendation (up to 5 days)
- If there are grounds for a suspension longer than 5 days, the Principal will discuss this with the College's Senior Leader – School Progress and Performance
- A member of the College Leadership Team will inform the student and family of the grounds on which the decision to suspend has been made.

## **Notification to families for a day or more suspension**

A student will 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.

Notification can take place by phone to a member of the family, who will also be notified of the suspension, in written form, within a reasonable time.

Notification can take place by email to alert the family to the suspension if the phone call has been unsuccessful.

In all cases, the written suspension notification will:

- 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 (ESSS)**

All suspensions that are a full day or longer will be documented by the school using ESSS. 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.

## **3.6 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.

In instances where there has been a problematic relationship between the family and the school, the Principal may 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 will 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.

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.

### 3.7 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 of 1-5 days should be directed to the Principal. For suspensions over 5 days the appeal should be directed to the Senior Leader School Performance.

Sanction	Appeal Process
Suspension 1-5 days	Appeal made to the school principal
Suspension 6+ days	Appeal made to the Senior Leader School Performance by emailing <a href="mailto:SchoolProPer@bne.catholic.edu.au">SchoolProPer@bne.catholic.edu.au</a>
Outcome of Appeal	The appeal reviewer (Principal or Senior Leader – School Performance) must: (a) make the review decision within 5 business days after the application is made; and (b) as soon as practicable after the decision is made give the person written notice of the decision.
Exclusion	An appeal against an exclusion must be submitted in writing to the Compliance and Performance Executive within 10 school days after receiving notification of the exclusion.

### 3.8 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

A detailed review is required every 3 years with a high-level check performed annually.

## 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

Appeal	A student, parent/legal guardian may request a review of a suspension decision.
De-escalation	An approach to conflict resolution with the opportunity for cooling off A desirable outcome of a suspension, not a strategy to apply suspension
Formal sanction	A consequence applied following unproductive behaviour. It is formal in nature as part of a process that is planned and documented.
Part-time suspension	While suspended a student is able to maintain access to designated programs such as an apprenticeship or traineeship
Safeguarding	Policies, systems and practices that enable a safe environment for children and young people and offer an efficient response to incidents posing risks to that safe environment. BCE and National Catholic Safeguarding Standards provide a framework for Catholic Church entities to build child-safe cultures.
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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