
Responding to Behaviours of Serious Concern Policy



St Columba College
A joint Anglican and Catholic College

Responding to Behaviours of Serious Concern Policy

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Acknowledgement of Country

St Columba College Munno Para Inc. acknowledges the first custodians of Australia - First Nations Peoples - and we pay our respects to elders, past, present and future.

DOCUMENT CONTROL

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1. Preamble

At St Columba College students and staff work together to create the best possible learning environment for all. This policy should be considered in conjunction with the Student Personal Responsibility Policy.

Our expectations and values are founded in our Christian belief of living the Gospel message to “Love your neighbour as yourself” [Mark 12:31]. Therefore, we seek to establish authentic relationships based on respect and affirming interactions. Positive relationships and cooperation are a fundamental aspect of effective teaching and learning at St Columba College.

St Columba College aims to provide an environment where each student is recognised as a unique individual with rights and responsibilities towards themselves and others. The College upholds the belief that when making decisions in relation to student personal choices, a balance is maintained between caring for the individual along with the overall good of the College community.

2. Rationale

2.1. As an Anglican and Catholic community, we support parents in the development of a sense of responsibility and self-discipline in their children. However, “parents have a particularly important part to play in the educating community, since it is to them that primary and natural responsibility for their children’s education belongs” (The Catholic School of the Threshold of the Third Millennium n20).

2.2. We share in the responsibility with parents for teaching students to, “overcome their individualism and discover, in the light of faith, their specific vocation to live responsibly in a community with others”. (The Catholic School n45). The educative process is intended to assist students to make a “conscious choice of living a responsible and coherent way of life.” (The Catholic School n49).

2.3. In the school environment, students are guided and encouraged to develop a sense of responsibility, self-control and self-discipline, to live responsibly and regulate their conduct in accordance with Christian principles. Through this development students come to:

- respect the welfare and needs of themselves and others
- be aware that their actions influence the creation and maintenance of the Anglican and Catholic environment of which they are part
- enhance the development of positive self-images
- gain a sense of belonging within the College and wider community
- develop an understanding of the consequences of their behaviour
- develop an awareness of processes, which assist in resolving problems as they arise

2.4. Despite the focus on these positive outcomes, the continued behaviour of a minority of students may require the Principal to consider their suspension from the College or the cancellation of their enrolment.

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3. Guidelines

- 3.1. This policy should be considered in conjunction with the Student Personal Responsibility Policy.
- 3.2. Action to suspend or cancel the enrolment of a student is a serious matter and will be carried out in a just and equitable manner, taking into account responsibilities to the whole College community and based on the principles of natural justice (the right to know; the right to respond and the right to a fair and unbiased decision).

4. Suspension

- 4.1. Suspension occurs when a student's attendance at the College has been temporarily withdrawn as a disciplinary measure, on the authority of the Principal for a set short or extended period of time.
 - Short suspension is a suspension from school for up to three school days
 - Extended suspension is a suspension for more than three school days
- 4.2. Time away from school allows a period of time for the parties involved to reflect on and enter into dialogue about the behaviour and circumstances that have led to the suspension, and to focus on the development of an appropriate response and process for a return to the classroom.
- 4.3. Suspension of a student may occur when the behaviour of a student is prejudicial to the safety and welfare of the student, staff and other students of the College and/or the reputation of the College.

Suspension can arise in circumstances where a student:

- continually disrupts learning and teaching
- is abusive or violent
- threatens serious physical harm to another person
- is involved in sexual harassment or abuse of others
- is in possession of illegal drugs
- is in possession of a prohibited weapon
- is in possession of or disseminating illegal material or material which may cause offence
- is involved in behaviour of a criminal nature, e.g. damaging or stealing property
- is involved in behaviour that is disruptive to the good order and function of the College, or behaviour endangering the wellbeing or safety of others
- is seriously defiant or uncooperative when asked to follow a reasonable directive
- engages in bullying, cyberbullying, harassment or victimisation
- displays ongoing disregard for the rules, standards and policies of the College
- continually disrupts the good order of the College
- poses a significant risk to the safety of another person
- unsatisfactory participation in learning, e.g. non-attendance at classes, refusal to complete set learning tasks and repeated failure to meet required deadlines

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5. Cancellation of Enrolment

- 5.1. Cancellation of enrolment occurs when a student's attendance at the College has been permanently withdrawn and involves a termination of the contract entered into at the time of enrolment by the parents/caregivers.
- 5.2. Cancellation of the enrolment of a student may occur when any of the student's conduct under paragraph 4.3 above is persistent or is otherwise incompatible with the student's ongoing enrolment.
- 5.3. Normally a period or periods of suspension occur as a means of dealing with unacceptable behaviours, before deciding to cancel the enrolment of a student. However, on some occasions, the student's misconduct may be considered so serious that the Principal may decide to cancel the enrolment of a student in circumstances where there has been no prior suspension.

6. Consultation and Communication

- 6.1. Where behaviours are emerging which are causing concern and which could lead to suspension and/or expulsion, parents/caregivers will be informed of the circumstances and that the continuation of these behaviours could lead to suspension and ultimately cancellation of enrolment.
- 6.2. Students will be informed of the behaviours causing concern which led to the consideration for suspension or cancellation of enrolment and will be given an opportunity to respond. Any decisions made to suspend or cancel the enrolment will be made on evidence which indicates that the student "more probably than not" behaved in such a manner. The decision will take into account what is best for the student, other students, staff and the broader College community.
- 6.3. Students and their parents/caregivers will be made aware of the processes that will be followed in dealing with issues of suspension or cancellation of enrolment.
- 6.4. Incidents may arise that require the College to report to SAPOL, Department of Child Protection or other relevant authorities.

7. Documentation

Appropriate documentation of serious incidents, displays of unacceptable behaviours and details relating to suspension and expulsion will be kept on file.

8. Process for Suspension

- 8.1. Normally, a process outlined in section 6.1 would occur before invoking suspension. However, in some circumstances serious misbehaviour or misconduct may lead to immediate suspension.
- 8.2. When a decision is made to suspend a student, the Head of School or Principal will inform the student of the grounds for the decision and the student will be given the opportunity to respond.
- 8.3. Notification of the decision to suspend the student and the grounds for the decision will be communicated to the parents/caregivers. This notification will be confirmed in writing. Where English is not the parents/caregivers first language, the Head of School or Principal will take steps to assist the parents/caregivers.

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- 8.4. This written notification will include:
- the reason(s) for the suspension
 - the duration and dates of the suspension
 - the parent's/caregiver's responsibility for the care and safety of the student during the time of the suspension
 - reference to the expectations regarding schoolwork and/or study if required during the suspension period
 - offer of support in dealing with the issues involved
 - details relating to a re-entry meeting to discuss a Return to School plan for the student
- 8.5. A student who has been suspended will not be sent home from the school without the full knowledge of parents/caregivers.
- 8.6. As soon as possible after suspension, the Head of School or Principal will arrange a re-entry meeting with the parties and the other appropriate personnel to deal with the issues surrounding the suspension. The student will not return to school until the re-entry meeting is held.
- 8.7. At the re-entry meeting, a plan will be developed with the student to support their return to the classroom. This may include a Behaviour Support Plan, restorative meetings, formal written agreements, counselling or referrals to external agencies.
- 8.8. Continued suspension from the College will result in a review meeting with the student, parents/caregivers and the Principal. Expectations for respectful and safe behaviour will be documented in a Condition for Continuing Enrolment Contract. Non-compliance by the student and/or parents and caregivers may result in the enrolment of the student being cancelled.

9. Process for the Cancellation of Enrolment

- 9.1. Where a recommendation to cancel the enrolment of a student is being considered, the parents/caregivers, and where appropriate the student concerned, are to meet with the Principal and the relevant Head of School to outline the reasons for the proposed cancellation.
- 9.2. Parents/caregivers and the student involved will be given the opportunity to respond.
- 9.3. The evidence in support of the recommendation to cancel the enrolment as well as the response of the parents/caregivers and student will be considered.
- 9.4. If a decision is made to cancel the enrolment the student, the parents/caregivers and student will be notified in writing.
- 9.5. The Chairperson will be notified of the decision to cancel the enrolment.
- 9.6. Where a student's enrolment is cancelled, it is envisaged that alternative placements for that student will be canvassed with the parents/caregivers by appropriate personnel, and through the appropriate channels.