Melbourne Archdiocese
Catholic Schools

Student Behaviour Support Policy for MACS Schools

1. Introduction

Melbourne Archdiocese Catholic Schools Ltd (**MACS**) is a company limited by guarantee established in 2021 by the Archbishop of the Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne to assume the governance and operation of MACS schools across the Archdiocese of Melbourne. MACS subsequently established Melbourne Archdiocese Catholic Specialist Schools Ltd (**MACSS**) to provide educational services to children with diverse learning needs and Melbourne Archdiocese Catholic Schools Early Years Education (**MACSEYE**) to provide early years care and education services.

The Statement of Mission in the MACS Constitution, and the constitutions of its subsidiaries, MACSS and MACSEYE, sets out the Archbishop's expectations of Catholic schooling in the Archdiocese and provides an important context and grounding for the company and the direction which the MACS Board must always observe in the pursuit of the company's objects.

The Board must ensure that all policies and procedures concerning the operations of MACS, and its subsidiaries are consistent with the Statement of Mission and company objects, as well as any directions issued by the Archbishop from time to time.

2. Background

All students and staff have the right to be treated fairly and with dignity in an environment that is safe and free from disruption, intimidation, harassment, and discrimination. The *Student Behaviour Support Policy for MACS Schools* is centred on creating safe, respectful, inclusive, and supportive learning environments. This involves teaching clear behaviour expectations and consistently upholding them each day. MACS places a strong emphasis on building positive relationships, fostering mutual respect and recognising positive student behaviour. By accommodating student's individual needs, MACS schools ensure that all students feel supported, empowered and equipped to thrive.

3. Purpose

This policy outlines MACS shared, evidence-informed approach to promoting, implementing, and sustaining safe, respectful, and positive student behaviour. It supports the creation of safe, inclusive, and respectful environments where all students can access and participate meaningfully in their learning.

4. Scope

This policy applies in MACS schools, including specialist schools operated by MACS subsidiary, Melbourne Archdiocese Catholic Specialist Schools Ltd (MACSS) and school boarding premises operated by MACS schools (**MACS schools**).

This policy refers to behaviour that has occurred in physical and digital environments:

- at school and on the way to and from school
- at official school extra-curricular activities including, but not limited to, functions and sporting events
- where students are representing the school, whether in school uniform or not
- where students are identifiable as a member of the school community
- where behaviour has occurred outside of school hours, or online, where the behaviour poses a significant risk to any student, staff, and/or the school community.

This policy also applies to volunteers, casual relief staff and parents and carers.

5. Statement of Commitment

MACS is committed to fostering safe, inclusive and respectful environments through implementing school-wide, consistent and fair approaches to student behaviour. MACS schools uphold the principles of procedural fairness and explicitly prohibit the use of corporal punishment in all circumstances, in accordance with the *Education and Training Reform Act 2006* (Vic).

6. Principles

Guided by Ministerial Order 1359, the Victorian Child Safe Standards, Education and Training Reform Regulations 2017 (Vic), our Catholic faith and our *Vision for Engagement* position statement, the Student Behaviour Support Policy is based on the following principles:

- Every student is inspired and enabled to flourish and enrich the world (*MACS 2030*).
- Strong partnerships with families and school communities foster safe, inclusive and enabling learning environments where respect, voice and wellbeing are prioritised through clearly articulated practices that actively address concerns such as bullying and harm.
- Student engagement is central to learning improvement, as articulated in the MACS *Vision for Engagement* – Learning improves when students feel safe and expectations are clear.
- Positive behaviour approaches are embedded through proactive and preventative strategies that build on individual strengths, apply reasonable adjustments and support students in respectful and constructive ways.
- Student behaviour is addressed consistently, with transparency, and fairly, ensuring MACS schools remain free from disruption, intimidation, harassment, and discrimination.

7. Duty of care

Principals and staff in MACS schools have a duty of care to take reasonable steps to protect students from foreseeable harm, whether in physical or online environments, and to work for the positive wellbeing of the child.

MACS schools are required to implement and maintain an effective Student Behaviour Support Policy and procedures that promote a consistent and fair approach towards managing student behaviour. These documents must include:

- a clear prohibition of corporal punishment
- an explanation of the school's approach to behaviour management, ensuring it affords procedural fairness to students
- instructional and inclusive behaviour management strategies that include staff training and support equitable access to education for every student
- procedures for managing suspensions, negotiated transfers and expulsions, including the maintenance of a register for suspensions and expulsions.

The Student Behaviour Support Policy and associated procedures must be clearly communicated to staff, students, Parents and Carers and the wider school community, including timely updates as needed.

8. Tiered system of supports to behaviour

MACS schools implement an evidence-based, tiered system of supports to behaviour (e.g. the Multi-tiered System of Supports (MTSS) framework). A tiered system of supports optimises academic learning, positive behaviour, and health and wellbeing for all students.

MTSS provides a consistent framework across MACS schools, integrating *Vision for Instruction* and *Vision for Engagement*. Five essential elements underpin the MTSS:

- multi-level prevention system
- evidence-based teaching practices
- universal screening and targeted assessment
- data-based decision-making

- progress monitoring.

MTSS practices must be implemented with fidelity, sustained over time, and aligned across the three domains: academic, behaviour, and health and wellbeing.

9. Responding to behaviour

MACS schools implement positive behaviour strategies to teach and reinforce positive behaviour. For additional information, schools should refer to the PBL page on CEVN.

9.1 Responding to breaches of school policies or the Student Code of Conduct

MACS schools apply a staged and educative approach to supporting student behaviour that breaches school policies or the MACS Student Code of Conduct. Responses are guided by the school's behaviour support framework and consider the nature of the breach, the student's age and individual circumstances.

In line with the Positive Behaviour Support Guidelines, serious or repeated breaches are addressed through the *Student Behaviour Support Procedures* and the *Suspension, Negotiated Transfer and Expulsion of Students Procedures*.

9.2 Suspension, negotiated transfer and expulsion

When a student's behaviour meets the grounds for suspension, negotiated transfer or expulsion and other support mechanisms are exhausted, the Principal has the authority to initiate the relevant process. These actions must follow the *Suspension, Negotiated Transfer and Expulsion of Students Procedures*. Principals are responsible for ensuring that decision-making is consistent, duty of care is maintained, and procedural fairness and transparency are upheld throughout the processes.

The Principal is responsible for:

- communicating the school's *Suspension, Negotiated Transfer and Expulsion of Students Procedures* to families at the time of enrolment and to the wider school community at the start of each academic year
- maintaining a register of all suspensions, negotiated transfers and expulsions within the school.

Same-day response

In the rare and exceptional circumstance where the classroom or school environment is deemed not safe for a student, the Principal has the authority to direct the student to not attend class, following an incident, for the remainder of the school day and the following school day. This action is referred to as a same-day response and is an immediate safety response used only in extenuating circumstances. If, after this period, the classroom or school environment remains unsafe for the student's return, the Principal may issue an extension to the same-day response.

This is a short-term response intended to support the student to access education from home, until it is safe for the student to return to the school environment. An extension may be applied for a maximum of five consecutive school days. An extension to the same-day response cannot be issued in isolation. These actions must be followed by the development or review of the student's Behaviour Support Plan and Student Safety Plan, and follow the relevant processes outlined in the *Suspension, Negotiated Transfer and Expulsion of Students Procedures*.

9.3 Parameters around use of restraint or seclusion

MACS does not include restraint or seclusion in Student Behaviour Support Plans or Student Safety Plans. Restraint or exclusion should not be identified as appropriate interventions. In rare and exceptional circumstances, their use may be considered reasonable, necessary and proportionate to protect the safety of a student or another person. Any use of restraint or seclusion must follow the Positive Behaviour Support Guidelines and be based on professional judgment, documented and reported according to MACS requirements, and followed by the development of or review of the student's Behaviour Support Plan and Safety Plan.

9.4 Exclusionary practices

MACS does not endorse or support the use of 'informal suspensions' or 'soft expulsions'. These practices undermine student rights and due process and must not be used as a substitute for formal behaviour support planning or for suspension, negotiated transfer or expulsion.

Informal suspensions include practices such as reset days, using modified timetables as circuit breakers or to manage staffing constraints, or excluding student(s) from learning when a leader is unavailable. Soft expulsions refer to situations where a student is encouraged to leave the school without undergoing a formal negotiated transfer or expulsion process.

9.5 Student Engagement Unit program supports

MACS offers a variety of program supports to assist schools. Detailed information about the available supports can be found on the Student Support pages on CEVN.

10. Teaching respectful behaviour

MACS schools commit to teaching respectful behaviour where consistent, school-wide expectations are set, taught, and maintained, and creating safe and inclusive environments for all students and staff.

11. Record keeping

Principals are responsible for ensuring all records are stored in a secure manner in accordance with Ministerial Order 1359 – Child Safe Standards, the relevant MACS record keeping and information management procedures and Public Record Office Victoria Recordkeeping Standards.

12. Roles and reporting responsibilities

Role	Responsibility	Reporting requirement
Principal	Ensure all policies for the care, safety and welfare of students are publicly available.	Annual attestation to the Executive Director.
Principal	Establish and apply school processes to effectively implement the policy and procedures.	
Principal	Establish and apply school processes to maintain a register of suspensions, negotiated transfers and expulsions.	
Principal	Report any incident resulting in injury to a person via MACS Guard.	
Principal	Report any significant and/or repeated student behavioural incidents, where wellbeing or safety was at risk, or any aggressive behaviour or physical threats involving students, Parents and Carers or the public via MACS Guard.	
School Leaders (Principals, Deputy Principals)	Coordinate targeted support for students whose behaviour indicates emerging or persistent needs.	Submit all Student Engagement Unit consultation requests and maintain case-notes via the ROSAE application on CEVN.
School staff (all)	Understand and apply school processes to ensure consistent application and adherence to policy and procedures.	

13. Procedures

Procedures to implement and support this policy are published separately and available on the school's website. The procedures must be contextualised by each Principal using the approved template and the supporting documents referenced below.

14. Definitions

Definitions of standard terms used in this Policy can be found in the Glossary of Terms.

Multi-tiered system of supports

A three-tier framework to support intervention at increasing levels of intensity (AERO 2024a).

15. Related policies and documents

Supporting documents

Positive Behaviour Support Guidelines
Return to School Plan
Student Absence Learning Plan
Student Behaviour Support Plan
Student Behaviour Support Procedures
Student Safety Plan – Template
Suspension, Negotiated Transfer and Expulsion of Students Procedures

Related MACS policies and documents

Attendance Policy
Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy
Child Safety and Wellbeing Procedures
Child Safety and Wellbeing Recordkeeping Procedures
Code of Conduct for MACS Staff
Complaints Handling Policy
Duty of Care Policy
Enrolment Policy
Health, Safety and Wellbeing Policy
ICT Acceptable Usage Policy – Students
Pastoral Care of Students Policy
Reportable Conduct Policy
Student Bullying Prevention and Response Policy
Student Bullying Prevention and Response Procedures
Student Code of Conduct

Resources (external)

Australian Student Wellbeing Framework (2018)

Department of Education and Training (Vic). 2021. Cybersafety and Responsible Use of Digital Technologies

Department of Education and Training (Vic). 2020. Mobile Phones - Student Use.

eSmart – assists schools to develop a culture that promotes the safe, smart and responsible use of technology.

eSafety Commissioner – provides a range of up-to-date information and resources, coupled with a complaints system to assist children who experience serious cyberbullying and image-based abuse.

Privacy Compliance Manual (2020). Catholic Education Commission of Victoria Ltd (CECV) (CEVN website)

Safe Socials | vic.gov.au

Student Wellbeing Hub

Public Record Office Victoria Recordkeeping Standards

16. Legislation and standards

Education and Training Reform Act 2006 (Vic)
Education and Training Reform Regulations 2017 (Vic)
Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth)
Disability Standards for Education 2005 (Cth)
Equal Opportunity Act 2010 (Vic)
Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004 (Vic)

Ministerial Order 1359 – Implementing the Child Safe Standards – Managing the Risk of Child Abuse in Schools and School Boarding Premises

Policy information

Responsible executive	Director, Education Excellence
Policy owner	Chief of Student Services
Approving authority	MACS Board
Assigned board committee	Child Safety and Risk Management Committee
Approval date	3 December 2025
Risk rating	Extreme
Review by	December 2027
Publication	MACS website, CEVN, gabriel, school website

POLICY DATABASE INFORMATION	
Assigned framework	Care, Safety and Welfare of Students
Supporting documents	See list of supporting documents and related policies above
Superseded documents	Student Behaviour Policy – Schools – 2022
New policy	Yes