

SUSPENSION, NEGOTIATED TRANSFER AND EXPULSION POLICY

1.0 INTRODUCTION

One of the distinguishing characteristics of the Catholic school is respect for the dignity of all people. St Michael's Catholic Primary School, Heyfield (the School) promotes positive relationships in a safe and supportive environment, guided by the values of justice, equity, respect and compassion. Students are expected to behave in ways that uphold these values and respect the rights of others to be safe, learn, express themselves and take responsibility for their choices.

Therefore, the School and the Diocese of Sale Catholic Education Limited (DOSCEL) Office hold that the development and promotion of high-quality relationships among all members of the school community are best achieved within environments that are safe, supportive, inclusive and empowering.

2.0 PURPOSE

Every student in the School deserves to have a safe and positive learning experience where they are engaged and supported to reach their full potential. All students and staff have the right to be treated fairly and with dignity in an environment that is safe, free from disruption, intimidation, harassment and discrimination. To achieve this, the School maintains high standards of student behaviour.

The *DOSCEL Whole School Approach to Positive Behaviour Support* guides the development of school policies and processes that promote positive student behaviour and respond to challenging behaviour. In addition, the *Behaviour Management Policy and Procedure* set out how the School implements behaviour management policies, procedures and processes that are underpinned by a whole-school positive behaviour approach and comply with relevant legislation.

As part of a multi-tiered system of support behavioural expectations are shared at the whole-school level. Targeted and intensive supports may be also implemented for small groups and individual students to develop positive student behaviour. When a student's actions compromise the health, safety or wellbeing of other students or staff, the Principal may consider suspension, negotiated transfer or expulsion.

This Policy is supported by the *Suspension, Negotiated Transfer and Expulsion Procedures*, which describes the basis for suspending, transferring or expelling a student, and the procedures that the School leadership must follow before taking such action.

This Policy and the associated Procedures are implemented alongside the School's *Behaviour Management Policy and Procedure, Protection of Children Policy and Procedure, Duty of Care Policy and Pastoral Care Policy*.

3.0 CATHOLIC MISSION

The School brings to life the mission of the Catholic Church by engaging and aligning all efforts toward the achievement of DOSCEL's vision for education: *faith-inspired educational excellence for a hope filled future*.

4.0 COMMITMENT TO CHILD SAFETY

The School holds the care, safety and wellbeing of children and young people as a central and fundamental responsibility of Catholic education. This commitment is drawn from the teaching and mission of Jesus Christ.

5.0 SCOPE

This Policy applies to the School and the proposed suspension, negotiated transfer or expulsion of its students.

The Policy is implemented in consideration of the following principles:

Fairness: All students and staff have the right to be treated fairly and with dignity in an environment that is safe, free from disruption, intimidation, harassment and discrimination. To achieve this, all schools must maintain high standards of student behaviour. There will be cases of unacceptable behaviour where it will be in the best interests of the school community and/or the student involved for the student to be removed from the School for a period of time, or completely. Suspension, negotiated transfer and expulsion are options available to the Principal in these extenuating circumstances.

5.1 **Ongoing learning:** Prior to, and during processes of suspension, negotiated transfer and expulsion, schools must ensure that, where practicable:

- the appropriate personalised learning and behaviour support strategies have been used and documented.
- the appropriate support personnel available within the school system and externally have been involved.

Collaboration and genuine engagement between School staff, students and parents/guardians/carers is an important feature of behaviour support in Catholic schools. All should be fully aware of the School's wellbeing and behaviour support policies and practices.

5.2 **Supporting vulnerable students:** In implementing suspension, negotiated transfer or expulsion procedures, the Principal will consider the special provisions that may apply where vulnerable students and families are concerned. These include students:

- of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander descent.

- with disabilities.
- from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.
- in out-of-home care.
- presenting with mental health concerns.
- whose wellbeing or safety may be at risk, including students who may be at risk of family violence.

5.3 **Diversity and equity:** When responding to behaviour concerns associated with a student with a disability, consideration must be given to the requirements of the *Equal Opportunity Act 2010 (Vic.)*, *Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth)*, and *Disability Standards for Education 2005 (Cth)*. These Acts require that reasonable adjustments are provided to support students with a disability to access and participate in education on the same basis as other students.

5.4 **Transparency and voice:** Should parents/guardians/carers require a support person to participate fully in a suspension, negotiated transfer or expulsion process, a suitable support person may be involved. The responsibility for organising a support person rests with the student or parents/guardians/carers.

The Principal must ensure that records are made and retained of any action taken in relation to behaviour support or interventions put in place for the student and, if deemed necessary, the implementation of suspension, negotiated transfer or expulsion processes.

In determining whether a student's behaviour is serious enough to warrant suspension, negotiated transfer or expulsion, the Principal will consider the safety, care and wellbeing of the student, staff and other students. In such circumstances, the interests of the student shall be balanced against the common good.

6.0 POLICY OUTCOMES

- 6.1 The School provides a safe and supportive environment for staff, students and members of the community.
- 6.2 The School clearly documents their school-wide expectations, the processes for determining behaviour consequences, and intensive support plans for students.
- 6.3 The School and school community members work respectfully and collaboratively with families and communities.
- 6.4 Suspension, negotiated transfer and expulsion processes are transparent, fair and supportive, with appropriate checks in place to protect the rights and dignity of all students.
- 6.5 Prior to considering suspension, negotiated transfer or expulsion, the School ensures that appropriate personalised learning and behaviour support strategies have been used and documented, and that the appropriate support personnel available within the school system and externally have been involved.

- 6.6 Special provisions and considerations are applied for vulnerable students and families, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, students with disabilities, students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, students in out-of-home care, students with mental health concerns, and students at risk of harm or family violence.
- 6.7 Decisions regarding suspension, negotiated transfer and expulsion are made in accordance with the principles of procedural fairness, with students and families given genuine opportunities to be heard and to participate in processes that affect them.
- 6.8 When determining whether behaviour warrants suspension, negotiated transfer or expulsion, the School balances the interests of individual students against the safety and wellbeing of other students and staff.
- 6.9 Record-keeping complies with the Child Information Sharing Scheme (CISS), Family Violence Information Sharing Scheme (FVISS) and Multi-Agency Risk Assessment and Management Framework (MARAM) obligations.

7.0 DEFINITIONS

- 7.1 **Suspension:** Suspension occurs when a student's attendance at school has been temporarily withdrawn for a set time. Suspension allows the parties involved to reflect on and dialogue about the behaviour and circumstances that have led to the suspension, and to plan and/or review learning and behaviour supports to assist a student to engage positively with school and learning. A suspension may be an internal suspension (allowing the student to undertake education activities on the school premises, subject to certain restrictions) or an external/out-of-school suspension (where the student's right to attend the school is withdrawn for a defined time).
- 7.2 **Negotiated Transfer:** A negotiated transfer means a documented and mutually agreed move to another school is arranged. Negotiated Transfer may be considered when all other pastoral support, interventions and discipline measures, including suspension, have failed to resolve an issue of serious inappropriate student behaviour. A negotiated transfer ends the *Enrolment Agreement* with the first school and requires enrolment in the new school.
- 7.3 **Expulsion:** Expulsion involves the termination of the contract entered into at the time of enrolment by the parents/guardians/carers. Expulsion occurs when, following approval by the DOSCEL Executive Director, a student's attendance at their current school is permanently withdrawn by the Principal. The Principal, wherever possible, will work with the student and their parents/guardians/carers to arrange enrolment with another school.

8.0 COMMUNICATION

This Policy is available on the School portal and provided to parents upon request.

This Policy is available to staff on the staff portal and staff are annually upskilled on this Policy.

9.0 POLICY INFORMATION

Policy Owner	Catholic Identity, Leadership, Learning and Teaching
Approving Authority	DOSCEL Board
Assigned Board Committee	Finance Audit Risk Committee
Board Approval	20 February 2026
Risk Rating	Low
Implementation	March 2026
Review Date	2029

POLICY DATABASE INFORMATION

Supporting Documents	Suspension, Expulsion and Negotiated Transfer Procedure Behaviour Management Policy Protection of Children Policy Pastoral Care Policy Duty of Care Policy
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