



# GUIDELINES FOR Behaviour Support



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# Foreword

Foundational to Catholic schools and our work with students, families and communities is the building of genuine, authentic relationships. The development and promotion of high-quality relationships are responsibilities shared by all members of the school community. Teachers, students, families, parishes and the wider community contribute to fostering life-affirming relationships that recognise and support the inherent dignity of each person.

Students in our schools today present with a diversity of needs and require support in a range of ways, including behavioural support. Well-articulated school policies on behaviour expectations and management – if age-appropriate, pastorally driven and focused on ensuring a just and reasonable balance of individual and community rights – will assist in building and maintaining a positive school culture and a safe learning and work environment for students and staff.

These Guidelines for Behaviour Support provide support and focus for schools in developing and strengthening their behaviour-related policies and practices. They reflect the values of Catholic education in respecting the dignity of each person, building inclusive, supportive and caring relationships, fostering compassion and forgiveness, and promoting the practice of respectful behaviour. They are also instructive in their coverage of the regulatory and compliance requirements governing schools' actions in this area.

The guidelines complement the 2016 CECV publication, Whole-School Approaches to Supporting Positive Student Behaviour and uphold the Ballarat Diocesan Schools Advisory Council's Pastoral Care Policy.

I commend this publication to you and am confident you will find the materials most useful in your ongoing support of students.



Audrey Brown

Director

Catholic Education Ballarat

# Purpose

These guidelines present Catholic Education Ballarat's expectations and recommended procedures regarding Behaviour Support, and are to be read in conjunction with the Ballarat Diocesan Schools Advisory Council's *Pastoral Care Policy*.

Behaviour support policies and procedures in Catholic schools seek to respect the dignity of each person; build inclusive, supportive and caring relationships; foster compassion and forgiveness; and provide information about the practice of respectful behaviour.

These guidelines endeavour to provide schools with an understanding of factors that promote positive student engagement and academic achievement. They address the continuum of student behaviour and recommended supports and responses at each stage of the continuum.

It is well established in the research that orderly classrooms are strongly associated with higher student engagement and achievement (Angus et al. 2009, Hattie 2003, Marzano & Marzano 2003). Conway (2012) describes the learning environment as a complex series of interrelated elements involving an interplay between the physical environment, the characteristics of the teacher, the presentation of the curriculum (including pedagogy and resources), and a multitude of student variables, all of which influence student behaviour.

It is clear that in designing systems of behaviour support, all elements must be considered.

These guidelines are not intended to cover the broad range of behavioural issues, protocols and procedures that might constitute a school's Behaviour Support policy or code of conduct. Nonetheless, principals and leadership teams will find these guidelines useful in understanding how to support positive student behaviour, and the regulatory/compliance requirements governing schools' actions in this area.

Where relevant, the guidelines refer to resources developed by the Victorian Department of Education and Training (DET) and web links are provided for these resources throughout the document. It is to be noted that Victorian Government schools are bound by a Ministerial Order (No. 625) in matters of suspension and expulsion of students (Victorian Department of Education and Training 2014f). While not binding for Catholic schools, the Ministerial Order and the DET resources provide very clear protocols for schools to follow.

Assistance and guidance in the implementation of processes described herein may be obtained from the Catholic Education Office Ballarat.

*The Church looks upon you as co-workers with an important measure of shared responsibility ... To you it is given to create the future and give it direction by offering to your students a set of values with which to assess their newly discovered knowledge ... [The changing times] demand that educators be open to new cultural influences and interpret them for young pupils in the light of Christian faith. You are called to bring professional competence and a high standard of excellence to your teaching ... But your responsibilities make demands on you that go far beyond the need for professional skills and competence ... Through you, as through a clear window on a sunny day, students must come to see and know the richness and joy of a life lived in accordance with Christ's teaching, in response to his challenging demands. To teach means not only to impart what we know, but also to reveal who we are by living what we believe. It is this latter lesson which tends to last the longest. (Libreria Editrice Vaticana 1984)*

# Behaviour Support – Guiding Principles

These guidelines are premised on the following key principles of effective practice in promoting and sustaining positive student behaviour.

## Our Catholic Tradition

- Catholic schools uphold an unequivocal commitment to fostering the dignity, self-esteem and integrity of children and young people and to providing them with safe, supportive and enriching environments to develop spiritually, physically, intellectually, emotionally and socially.
- Followers of Christ, baptised into his redeeming death and resurrection, are called to always be people of care, empathy, compassion, mercy and forgiveness.
- The common good of communities is guaranteed when people recognise and observe their mutual rights and duties and proactively work to ensure that the rights and duties of all community members are recognised, respected and fulfilled.
- Pastoral and restorative principles and practices that reflect gospel values, Catholic social teaching and diocesan policies on student wellbeing ought to influence a school's response to promoting positive relationships and responding to challenging student behaviours.

## Student behaviour education and pastoral care – a whole-of-school responsibility

- A Catholic school's provision of positive behaviour education and behaviour support is pastorally driven, comprehensive, and whole-of-school in nature.
- The development of students' spiritual, social-emotional, academic, organisational and communication skills, along with their academic progress, is a responsibility shared collectively by the individual teacher and the entire school community.

## Pastoral care for the entire school community – a principal's responsibility

- The principal has responsibility for ensuring that pastoral care is extended to all members of the school community, balancing of the rights, needs, obligations and wellbeing of all concerned.
- In all circumstances, interactions and decisions are to be guided by values and principles from our Catholic tradition that include justice, equity, integrity, respect and compassion and that place utmost priority on ensuring personal and communal safety, health, and duty of care.

## Student behaviour and learning

- The outcomes and benefits of promoting positive behaviour in schools are to create safe, supportive learning environments that lead to increased student engagement and improved academic outcomes.
- Specific elements of high-quality teaching include knowing students and how they learn (AITSL 2011). Teachers are challenged to develop an accurate understanding of what the students know, what they are ready to learn, and how to support progress and achievement.
- The *Victorian Health Promoting Schools and Early Childhood Education and Care Services Framework* (Victorian Department of Education and Training 2012), with its emphasis on personal resilience, prevention and primary intervention, is a positive and broad model that will assist schools in formulating behaviour support processes for individual students.

# Positive Behaviour Support – Overview

Positive Behaviour Support (PBS) focuses on strategies and methods that aim to assist students to reduce challenging behaviours and increase success through the learning of new skills.

Proactive strategies are aimed at decreasing behaviours of concern and replacing them with pro-social skills that lead to enhancement of positive social interaction.

Schools work towards creating a climate where positive behaviour is explicitly taught and reinforced, and prevention approaches are emphasised. Incidences of negative behaviour are responded to systematically and consistently, with challenging behaviours viewed as skill or performance deficits.

Supporting individuals with challenging behaviours is focused on the teaching of skills and desired behaviours. Support provided to students is in line with the goals and targets set out in their Personalised Learning Plan and/or Behaviour Support Plan.

The Queensland Department of Education and Training (2015) outlines the range of benefits and supports for individual students when PBS is effectively implemented. These are that PBS:

- values the student and his/her attempts at positive interaction
- concentrates primarily on preventing the occurrence of an identified behaviour by avoiding or adapting the circumstances that usually trigger this behaviour
- focuses on building skills and developing alternative preferred behaviours
- considers the motivation for or functions of behaviours
- uses the student's strengths and interests to increase success
- increases an individual's quality of life by supporting increased access and engagement.

# Developing a Behaviour Support Policy – Guidelines

Effective schools collaboratively develop and implement fair and respectful whole-school behaviour management and support systems based on pro-social values, social competencies, and positive relationships.

A Behaviour Support Policy details behaviour management guidelines that clearly articulate positive behaviour expectations, support systems and responses, in order to create learning environments in which all students are included and feel safe and supported.

When schools are developing an effective Behaviour Support Policy, key elements need to be considered. The policy should:

- reflect the school vision and its distinctive values
- clearly outline the aims, processes and strategies that will be implemented
- ensure that respect for the rights of all members of the school community is at the forefront of all practices
- acknowledge the role of partnerships between school staff, families, students and community
- have clear and practical processes that are grounded in positive behaviour support
- reflect current research about student engagement and appropriate behaviour
- acknowledge the need to teach students
- the skills required for demonstrating appropriate, pro-social behaviour
- clearly outline strategies for positive reinforcement of appropriate behaviour
- clearly outline prevention strategies for a range of inappropriate behaviours
- provide for the ongoing evaluation of processes and strategies.

The Victorian Department of Education and Training (2010) has designed a resource titled *Developing a Behaviour Guidance Policy*. It includes information on the key elements of behaviour management and support that should be included.

# CECV Intervention Framework

The Catholic Education Commission of Victoria Ltd (CECV) publication *CECV Intervention Framework 2015 (CECV 2015)* identifies key principles, structures and processes which should be considered in developing effective school practice. It outlines an 'Intervention Process' encompassing accurate identification and ongoing monitoring of individual students, with particular emphasis placed on identifying students who may require an adjusted level of support to actively and successfully engage in appropriate learning.

The intervention process is informed by the 'Response to Intervention (RtI) Model', defined as the change in behaviour or performance as a function of an intervention (Gresham 2009). The RtI model is a multi-tiered approach to providing services and intervention for students, including screening, interventions at increasing levels of intensity, progress monitoring and data-based decision-making. Using a multi-levelled approach, it aims to provide early, systematic and appropriately intensive assistance to students who are demonstrating skill deficits (Fuchs and Fuchs 2006).

This model integrates assessment and intervention within a multi-level prevention system to maximise student achievement, promote positive classroom interactions and reduce behavioural problems. The CECV recognises that this model offers schools a means to better understand and support students with diverse learning needs.

The *CECV Intervention Framework* describes the five steps of effective intervention as:

- 1. Identification-** teachers collect quality information from a range of sources
- 2. Targeted Assessment-** teachers are asked to consider formal and informal assessments if further information is required
- 3. Analysis and interpretation-** analysis of a broad range of assessment and observational data that assists teachers in developing a detailed student profile
- 4. Learning and teaching-** clearly stated goals are identified, together with research-based approaches which consider the expertise and resources required for effective implementation by the teacher, learning support officer (LSO), and/or parent. A Personalised Learning Plan (PLP)\* may be documented using a problem solving methodology
- 5. Evaluation-** a process for evaluating both PLP implementation, with student progress clearly documented and time-framed by teachers.

*\*In the context of students presenting with complex and challenging behaviour, a Behaviour Support Plan may take the place of a PLP, or developed in addition to a PLP.*



# Response Continuum

'Challenging behaviour' is best understood as a continuum which ranges from students' needs requiring universal classroom-based support, to the most complex needs requiring an individualised approach.

The CECV Intervention Framework (2015) describes the Response to Intervention (RtI) model as:

*a multi-tiered approach to providing services and intervention for students, at increasing levels of intensity, based on progress monitoring and data analysis. This model integrates assessment and intervention within a multi-level prevention system to maximise student achievement, promote positive classroom interactions and reduce behavioural problems (CECV 2015, p. 9).*

The model offers schools a means to better understand and support students with diverse learning needs and considers the academic and behavioural capabilities of learners holistically. Students respond to a series of constantly interacting elements – teachers, students, curriculum, pedagogy and the learning environment. The RtI model is based on the belief that teachers have the responsibility to create the best possible learning environment for each and every student through effective screening, progress monitoring and data-based decision-making processes using a multi-level decision-making system.

The 'first tier' of support is also known as Tier 1, the universal tier. In Tier 1, some supplementary adjustments may be made, as part of regular classroom teaching. Students who are not able to experience success are provided with further and more intentional supports through a 'second tier' of instruction – Tier 2. At this level, support is provided to meet the needs of a smaller and more targeted student group. Should further support be required, students are able to access more intensive strategies through a 'third tier' of instruction and extensive adjustment – Tier 3.

It is expected that students will move between and within the tiers of instruction. When the response continuum is considered specifically with regards to behaviour support, it is notable that the intensity and frequency of support necessarily increases, relative to increases in the behavioural needs and challenges of the student. The level of intervention becomes increasingly systematic and data-driven, depending on where the student's needs lie on the continuum. The data continues to provide a holistic view of all variables that impact on learning.

Sugai and Horner (2002) describe the key features of these tiers in the following pages.

## Tier 1: Universal

**100% of students, 100% of the time**

A process of intervention informed by pre- and post-learning assessments managed by the teacher and implemented within the regular learning environment and related settings.

**Universal strategies apply for all students.**

All students receive high-quality, scientifically based instruction, differentiated to meet diverse student capabilities.

### KEY FEATURES

- Requires explicit teaching of positively stated behaviours.
- Responds to high-frequency, low-intensity behaviours as part of regular practice.
- Teacher takes responsibility for managing behaviour.
- Support may be sought from senior staff within the school for additional supportive strategies, e.g. from Learning Support, Welfare/Wellbeing coordinators.

### CONTINUUM OF SUPPORT

#### UNIVERSAL STRATEGIES

- 1. Identify a small number of positively stated school rules.**
- 2. Prominently display the rules.**
- 3. Explicitly teach the positively stated behaviours.**
- 4. Strategically reinforce the behaviours.**
- 5. Modify teaching strategies, curriculum and learning environment as required to support positive student engagement.**

Where students are identified as continuing to experience difficulties to positively engage, a behaviour support meeting is convened to determine if further intervention strategies can be identified for trial or if a move to Tier 2 support is required.

## Tier 2: Targeted (Group) Intervention

### Students who require additional support

Students not making adequate progress in the core curriculum are provided with increasingly intensive instruction matched to their needs.

A process of targeted assessment and intervention is developed jointly by the classroom teacher and Learning Support, Student Welfare/Wellbeing personnel. Where applicable, additional input may be sought from experts e.g. Psychologist/Paediatrician/Behaviour Expert/Learning Consultant ASD. Strategies are identified for implementation in the regular learning environment and in related learning areas as required.

**Students are only to be moved to Tier 2 following documented intervention and review at Tier 1.**

### KEY FEATURES

- There is detailed identification of learner capabilities, including:
  - targeted assessment
  - analysis and interpretation of data
  - data-informed learning and teaching plan
  - interventions that are evaluated for progress towards identified goals
  - data cycles that are used to modify interventions
  - positive student behavioural responses that are strongly and explicitly reinforced
  - the provision of multiple, explicit opportunities to teach desired behaviours.
- The class teacher is responsible for the Behaviour Support Plan.
- There is ongoing consultation between teacher/s and Learning Support, Student Welfare/ Wellbeing personnel and other relevant support staff.
- Additional support is sought where required from the regional office.

### CONTINUUM OF SUPPORT

1. Continue to apply and reinforce universal strategies.
2. Establish a Program Support Group to involve parents.
3. Identify learner capabilities and collect relevant data.
4. Use data to develop a Behaviour Support Plan.
5. Implement the Behaviour Support Plan.
6. Review the Behaviour Support Plan and use data to modify.
7. Seek external support (if necessary).

Continue to use the Program Support Group as the decision-making body and use the RtI process to determine if the intervention strategies are supporting positive engagement. If further, more intensive support is required, move to Tier 3.

## Tier 3: Intensive Intervention

### Students who require individualised intervention

This level of intervention is designed to provide intensive support for students presenting with complex, ongoing difficulties and who are considered significantly at risk. Schools seek the involvement of Catholic Education Office Ballarat staff, in addition to external agencies, to complete a detailed functional behaviour assessment (FBA) and design a student Behaviour Support Plan.

Individualised, intensive interventions that support development of positive replacement behaviours are developed and implemented.

Complex behaviours are targeted to remediate and prevent further escalations.

Students are only moved to Tier 3 following documented intervention and review at Tier 2.

### KEY FEATURES

- Specialised process of identification, targeted assessment, analysis and interpretation, learning and teaching, and evaluation to occur as a more formalised, concrete process (CECV 2015).
- Involvement of a Catholic Education Office Ballarat Educational Consultant and Educational Service Team personnel (as required).
- External specialists engaged (if necessary).
- Involvement of school leadership.
- Key staff member (may not be the class teacher) responsible for overall management and coordination of Behaviour Support Plan.
- Reconvening of Program Support Group.

### CONTINUUM OF SUPPORT

1. Intensively apply and reinforce universal strategies.
2. Continue to use the Program Support Group as the key decision making body.  
Consider if additional expertise is required from Catholic Education Office Ballarat staff and/or external specialists.
3. Use additional data and advice to review and redevelop the Behaviour Support Plan.
4. Implement strategies and include collection and review of behaviour data.
5. Evaluate the intervention.
6. Convene Program Support Group to determine next steps.

# Serious Incidents

Under certain circumstances, a school may be required to make a response to a serious incident presented by a student. This can occur:

- with a student who has been supported and monitored as per the continuum and is receiving intensive intervention
- as a one-off incident with a student who has no prior history of requiring support and/or intervention.

## Strategies for De-escalation

It is important that teachers are trained to recognise when a student's behaviour is escalating and to have a planned response. The actions taken are critical in minimising behaviours of concern and the risks to the student and others. It is also important that teachers are able to identify the triggers and are attentive to the early signs of escalation so that they can implement de-escalation strategies. They will need to know when and how to act when the student is showing signs of agitation but the behaviour is not yet posing imminent risk of harm. In some cases, where a pattern of escalating behaviours has been noted, the strategies to be employed will be clearly documented in the Behaviour Support Plan (BSP).

Key de-escalation strategies include:

- remaining calm and speaking in a lowered tone of voice
- in some cases, distracting the student may be helpful
- providing short, positive instructions, indicating what they should do (not what they should stop doing), e.g. 'Take a mini break.' 'Move to your safe place.'
- moving slowly and being careful to maintain a non-threatening stance
- allowing reasonable personal space and not attempting to touch or stand near the student
- using non-verbal cues, particularly where these have been established.

If the student moves to a safe area, allow him/her to 'cool off,' prior to seeking to engage in conversation. There may be pre-arranged 'cooling off' strategies that the student is aware of and is able to employ to self-calm, e.g. moving to the 'safe place', employing breathing strategies, etc.

Where the de-escalation strategies result in a reduction in the student's level of agitation, staff should monitor the calming process and allow the student time to continue to calm. It is important to limit any further actions or changes to the environment that may cause re-escalation.

# Incident Management

Where the de-escalation strategies do not have the desired effect and the behaviours place the student or others at risk of imminent harm, the strategies employed will need to move from a de-escalation approach to one of incident management. Safety is of paramount importance in any incident management response and will encompass the safety of the student concerned, other students and staff members. The processes for incident management should be clearly documented and known to staff so that they are able to respond quickly.

Key actions generally include:

- seeking assistance from other members of staff and following a processes for alerting leadership
- moving students who are in the vicinity away from any perceived risk
- where possible, removing objects from the vicinity that may be of concern.

The DET resource *Responding to Challenging Behaviour* (Victorian Department of Education and Training 2014c) may benefit schools.

**During and following a serious incident, it is the principal's responsibility to minimise risk and consider the safety and wellbeing of all parties involved.**

**Once calm has been restored, enact the following process:**

- Provide support to staff and students.
- Consult with your Educational Consultant to determine the next phase of response.
- Notify parents on the day of the incident.
- Complete School Injury/Incident Report form on the CEVN website <https://cevn.cecv.catholic.edu.au> under *Staffing & IR/School Injury Incident Report form*.
- Ask all staff involved to document the incident.
- Where the incident has caused distress, further avenues of support for staff and students may be required, including access to staff of the Employee Assistance Program.
- Determine avenues for access to appropriate support to plan the prevention of future incidents, including staff training to:
  - a. Identify risk
  - b. mitigate risk
  - c. facilitate a return to school.

## Incident Management Process



# Student Behaviour Support Plans

A Student Behaviour Support Plan (BSP) is a working document designed to clearly outline the adjustments that will be implemented in order to maximise the student's engagement, thereby increasing learning outcomes.

BSPs should be developed through a collaborative problem-solving process involving all significant people in the student's life, including parents/ carers, classroom teachers, special educators and support staff. Plans will only be effective if they are implemented on a consistent basis and with fidelity. In order to develop successful interventions, BSPs must be based on an understanding that all behaviour has a communicative function and on knowledge of the strengths and needs of the individual student.

An effective BSP will support the student in developing skills required for positive social interaction, along with the ability to become a more effective and successful learner.

In designing a BSP, the following key elements need to be considered:

- All those directly involved with the student need to contribute to the gathering of relevant information and baseline data.
- Underlying causes/function of the behaviour are identified and target behaviour/s are listed.
- Goals set are Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-referenced (SMART goals) (Doran 1981). The goals describe desired replacement behaviours and planned responsive strategies.
- The plan needs to be succinct and easy to interpret.

- The BSP is developed through the Program Support Group (PSG), with the responsibilities of each key person clearly denoted.
- A coordinator will lead the team through the development, implementation and review of the BSP.
- The focus of the BSP is on proactive strategies, teaching replacement behaviours and positive reinforcement and planned responsive strategies.
- The BSP needs to be consistently implemented and monitored by all staff who engage with the student and across all learning areas.
- A timeline for the proposed intervention(s) is established and a date set for review through a PSG (review of behaviour data and interventions).
- The BSP is modified/faded as the student demonstrates significant positive change over a sustained period.
- Ongoing adjustments needed for maintained positive behaviour, and/or for ongoing support are considered.
- Regular follow-up monitoring will ensure evidence of sustained achievement of positive change in the student's ability to self-manage and better engage in his/her learning.

The Behaviour Support Plan will be recorded in writing, signed by the parties involved and dated.

# Developing a Student Behaviour Support Plan

An effective BSP will involve consultation with those who know the student well, including any medical or allied health professionals who may be involved in supporting the student and/or the family.

In designing the plan, the underlying issues or causes for the behaviour will need to be clearly identified, along with strategies and supports to directly address these causes. Where school staff are not familiar with the process for developing a BSP, it is recommended that advice is sought from the regional psychologists.

The Victorian Department of Education and Training (DET) provides an eight-step process to support schools in developing a BSP. The steps are:

1. gather relevant information about the student
2. convene a meeting of relevant school staff and the student's parents
3. convene a meeting of relevant school staff to draft the BSP
4. refine the BSP
5. sign the BSP
6. provide a copy to staff
7. review the BSP
8. conclude the BSP.

Further details for each step of the process, and additional resources that include a vodcast, can be located on the DET website (Victorian Department of Education and Training 2014a).

Additional resources in the development of Behaviour Support Plans are also provided by the Queensland Department of Education, Training and Employment (undated).

See also the **Resources, Tools and Templates** section of these guidelines, page 25, for a Student Behaviour Support Plan Template.



# Guidelines for the Use of Restraint and Seclusion in Schools

## Policy and Legislative Context

The information provided in this section of the guidelines draws substantially on the policies and guidelines of the Victorian Department of Education and Training (DET) regarding restraint and seclusion of students. The DET policy is outlined in the *School Policy and Advisory Guide for Victorian Government Schools* (Victorian Department of Education and Training 2014d). Catholic schools should note that the CECV endorses the direction provided in the *Education and Training Reform Regulations 2007* (Cth) and the DET policy advice (See Victorian Department of Education and Training 2014e).

In addition to the *Education and Training Reform Regulations 2007* and *Ballarat Diocesan Schools Advisory Council's Pastoral Care Policy*, these guidelines on the use of restraint and seclusion of students are influenced by and compliant with the following legislation:

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

All teachers and schools owe students a duty of care, and are required to take reasonable care to ensure student safety and their protection from reasonably foreseeable injuries. Moreover, it is recognised that staff in all schools are also owed a duty of care. The employer is required to provide and maintain, so far as reasonably practicable, a working environment that is safe and without risk. To this end, the CECV (2014) published guidelines for principals titled *Safe and Sound Practice Guidelines (Occupational Violence)*. The Guidelines provide principals with advice on how best to manage potential or actual occupational violence within their schools and address matters such as preventative practices, intervention practices (along with appropriate incident responses) and post-incident responsibilities.

## Students Exhibiting Complex and Challenging Behaviour

Effective support for students exhibiting complex and challenging behaviour requires a holistic response, involving school and community teams, the student and his/her family. This is best established by:

- the development and implementation of a student safety plan

- appropriate and targeted interventions, encompassing identification of learning and/ or behaviour needs, assessment, analysis and interpretation, learning and teaching strategies and ongoing evaluation
- specialised support to inform planning as required.

The use of restraint and seclusion **does not** form part of a student safety plan and should not be identified as an appropriate intervention. It is to be applied only in cases of emergency, and be considered a temporary measure.

Where a student is known to exhibit complex/ challenging behaviour, a risk assessment should also be undertaken. A risk assessment requires schools to identify the risks posed by the student (to themselves and others, and, in particular situations, to consider various risk mitigation strategies.

It is to be noted that these guidelines apply not only to students who have previously been identified as exhibiting complex/challenging behaviour, but also to students who have a 'one-off episode' of complex and challenging behaviour.

## Definitions

- **Duty of Care.** Every teacher and school authority owes students in their care a duty to take reasonable measures to protect students from risks of harm that are reasonably foreseeable.
- **Restraint.** The use of physical force to prevent, restrict or subdue movement of that person's body or part of their body, for the primary purpose of behavioural control.
- **Seclusion.** This involves solitary confinement of a person in a room or area from which their exit is prevented. This includes situations where the person believes he/she cannot or should not leave an area without permission.
- **Restrictive intervention.** A restrictive intervention is any intervention which effectively restricts a person's freedom of movement.
- **Least Restrictive intervention.** A practice that:
  - a. is not more restrictive or intrusive than necessary to prevent the person from inflicting harm on themselves or others; and
  - b. is applied no longer than necessary to prevent harm or danger.

In every circumstance where restraint and seclusion is applied, the least restrictive form of intervention should be used, for the least amount of time necessary.

- **Emergency.** A sudden state of danger requiring immediate action to prevent or manage a serious and imminent risk of harm to the person or to another person or people.
- **Time out.** A procedure in which the person is separated temporarily from a rewarding environment as part of a planned and therapeutic program to modify behaviour.

### Restrictive interventions

#### Time Out versus Seclusion

Time out and seclusion are different practices, and are used in different situations.

**Time out** is a practice used in schools to support students who require a break from a stressful or demanding situation, often when their behaviour is escalating. Time out is a planned intervention, to be used as part of an overall approach to supporting a student exhibiting complex behaviour. The use of time out should form part of a student's behaviour management and/or de-escalation plan. It is used to assist students to settle and return to a state of calm, so they are more actively able to participate academically and socially. The use of time out can be either teacher-directed or self-directed and takes place in a setting that is not locked.

**Seclusion** is a much more strongly directed approach, where students are placed in involuntary solitary confinement from which they cannot exit (either practically or in their perception). As with restraint, seclusion should only occur as an emergency response, and only applied when all other less restrictive intervention has been attempted. If a student is placed in a separate room, supervision must be maintained to ensure the school meets its duty-of-care obligations.

Schools must ensure their practices reflect time out in the context of a therapeutic educational strategy and not as a form of seclusion. As part of a carefully formulated Behaviour Support Plan (BSP), schools may seek advice in the development or refinement of the Student Safety Plan (SSP) in light of a serious incident.

### Protective Physical Interventions, Restraint and Seclusion

It should be noted that teachers in Catholic schools have a duty of care and responsibility to all students and that any physical action should consider maximum respect for the student's autonomy and their individual rights. In this light, it is the responsibility of all educators to consider all actions possible to reduce and eliminate restrictive practices.

Every child has the right to feel safe and strategies to prevent crises including providing access to quiet space, providing students with opportunities to move from a stressful environment to a 'safe space,' and communication aids to improve receptive and expressive communication with others. In rare circumstances, it may be necessary for a teacher to take an evasive action to prevent harm to themselves or a child. This can be to redirect a child that is engaging in self-harm (e.g. biting themselves) or to block a student attempting to hit out or to break away from a student's grip. The key purpose is to provide an opportunity to move away from harm. It **must** be noted that any physical intervention must be the least invasive way of protecting those involved. If there is a less invasive way of protecting those involved (e.g. exit the area), then that approach **should** be used. Every occurrence must be documented and the parents notified on the day. These actions are defined as **Protective Physical interventions**, and generally consist of an action that is applied with the sole view of providing the opportunity for staff or students to move to a safer area for protection.

The students' actions may have been blocked but he/she will remain free to move away. Any decision will need to consider the right to protect oneself from harm and the obligations under the Human Rights Charter to protect the rights, freedoms and inherent dignity of people. Further information can be located in the **Legal Obligations** section of the DET Schools Policy and Advice Guide (Victorian Department of Education and Training 2014b).

Where a **Protective Physical intervention** is used in Catholic schools, the incident must be documented through the management process outlined on page 11 of this guide should be followed. This will include reporting the incident to the principal, the regional principal consultant and completing the School Injury/Incident Report form.

## Restraint

Any further restrictive practice should be carefully considered, with physical restraint only used in the very rare circumstances and only for the period immediately required to protect the safety of the student or any other person. In making a decision that any form of restraint is required, staff should be fully aware that their actions may directly increase the risk of injury and trauma, both for the student and for the staff member applying the physical restraint. School staff should consider all alternate options including the removal of all other students, placement in another classroom, or cessation of activity causing distress.

In the event restraint is applied, the least restrictive form of restraint must be used for the minimum time possible to provide an opportunity to exit the area (i.e. no more force/intervention than could reasonably be considered necessary in the specific situation).

### Restraint may only be used:

- in an emergency where the danger of harm to the student and/or others is imminent; and
- the restraint is only to prevent the student from inflicting harm on him/herself and/or others; and
- there is no reasonable alternative to avoid the danger.

*All above conditions must be met.*

### Restraint should never be used:

- to maintain good order or respond to a class/school disruption
- as a response to:
  - » a student's refusal to comply
  - » verbal threats from a student leaving the classroom/school without permission
  - » property destruction caused by the student.

## Considerations when Applying Restraint

If a decision is made that the only action available is to apply a restraint, the following factors need to be considered:

- minimum force is applied and to avoid the danger and/or risk of harm
- the restraint should only be applied for a minimum time and should cease as soon as the immediate danger for the student or others is averted (e.g. the minimum time required to remove students immediately at risk from the area).

With respect to the student, consider:

- the age, grade and developmental level
- physical presentation – weight and stature
- any disability or impairment
- mental state
- medical conditions
- anticipated response.

Throughout the incident, staff should continue to engage with the student in a calm and measured way. Explain why the restraint is being applied and that it will cease once the student is no longer a danger to themselves or others.

Further detailed information regarding the use of restraint can be accessed from the *DET Schools Policy and Advisory Guide* (Victorian Department of Education and Training 2014e).

## Reporting the Use of Restraint and Seclusion

The CECV Safe and Sound Practice Guidelines (Occupational Violence) (CECV 2014) clearly describe the essential steps in reviewing any incident where physical violence is threatened or unfolds, or where damage to property has occurred.

*It is essential that all aspects of the school's management of the emergency or critical incident be reviewed (CECV 2014, p. 24).*

The review should include an investigation of:

- all aspects of the school's relevant risk assessment and management processes
- supportive practices that work well for the student/s involved
- key elements that led to the escalation or challenged the student/s in this event
- further adjustments or supports that, if implemented, could prevent a repetition of this event.

The student's safety plan and behaviour support plan should be reviewed in light of this information. The risk assessment may also require updating of school policies, processes and procedures, with staff and parents notified of the changes.

The principal should also consider the wellbeing of all staff and students post the incident, and the need for any additional support, including access to the Employee Assistance Program (EAP), counselling or professional development for staff.

A report of the incident is required for the school's accident/incident register. The School Injury/Incident Report form is located on the CEVN website <https://cevn.cecv.catholic.edu.au> under *Staffing & IR / School Injury Incident Report Form*. This report will also need to be provided to the appropriate diocesan personnel. Accurate student records detailing the incident should also be placed in the student's file.

Contact should be made by the principal with the parent/carer/guardian as soon as possible following any incident. Parental involvement should be a component of any ongoing procedures and include attendance at Program Support Group (PSG) meeting to discuss the incident and future strategies.

## Staff Training

In all situations, where reasonable and practicable, restraint should only be applied by staff who have been trained by a registered provider. Schools seeking to engage a registered provider to deliver appropriate training are asked to make contact with Catholic Education Office Ballarat.

The DET has issued detailed guidance for government school staff to assist with responding to violent and dangerous student behaviours. Titled *Guidance for Responding to Violent and Dangerous Student Behaviours of Concern* (Victorian Department of Education and Training 2015), the materials include information about legal obligations, resources for training, and fact sheets for parents.

Catholic school principals are strongly encouraged to review their school's Emergency Management Plan in light of these Catholic Education Office Ballarat guidelines and the material available through DET.

Principals should note that rooms or areas designed specifically for the purposes of seclusion or used solely or primarily for the purpose of seclusion are not permitted in Victorian government or Catholic schools.

Any restraint which covers the student's mouth or nose, in any way restricts breathing, takes the student to the ground into the prone or supine position, involves the hyperextension of joints, or application of pressure to the neck, chest or joints must not be used.

# Procedures for Suspension

Catholic Education Office Ballarat endorses the policy of the Victorian Department of Education and Training (DET) as outlined in its School Policy and Advisory Guide with regards to procedures for suspension and expulsion.

The information provided below sets a Catholic context for procedures for Suspension and Expulsion. It draws significantly on Ministerial Order No. 625 – Procedures for Suspension and Expulsion for Government Schools in Victoria (Victorian Department of Education and Training 2014).

Catholic schools in the Ballarat Diocese are subject to some additional requirements that are noted in the procedural advice below.

Due to the seriousness of suspension and expulsion, students who are subject to suspension and/or expulsion processes must have a 'relevant person' to participate in the process to support and advocate for them. **For most students this will be a parent or carer** (see below).

## Key Information

Ministerial Order No. 625 sets the following parameters for the suspension of students.

### AUTHORITY FOR SUSPENSION

Only the principal, or the principal's direct delegate, has the authority to suspend a student from the school of which he/she is the principal. In the Catholic school context, the parish priest/ canonical administrator/governance authority may also wish to be informed.

### GROUNDINGS FOR SUSPENSION

1. Subject to clause 2 below, a principal may suspend a student if the student:
  - behaves in such a way as to pose a danger, whether actual, perceived or threatened, to the health, safety or wellbeing of any person
  - causes significant damage to or destruction of property
  - commits, attempts to commit, or is knowingly involved in the theft of property
  - possesses, uses or sells, or deliberately assists another person to possess, use or sell illicit substances or weapons
  - fails to comply with any clear and reasonable instruction of a staff member so as to pose a danger- whether actual, perceived or threatened- to the health, safety or wellbeing of any person
  - consistently engages in behaviour that vilifies, defames, degrades or humiliates another
  - consistently behaves in an unproductive manner that interferes with the wellbeing, safety or educational opportunities of any other student.
2. The right to suspend only applies if the student is engaged in the behaviour referred to in clause 1 above while at school or travelling to or from school or while engaged in any school activity away from the school (including travel to and from that activity).

*Some wrongful behaviours of a serious nature are by definition criminal offences. These may include criminal damage of property, possession of a weapon, theft, assault, assault with weapons, use, possession or distribution of drugs, sexual assault. This list is indicative only and not exhaustive.*

*When a principal determines that a serious criminal offence has occurred, the school needs to be mindful of all its duties of care, including those owed to students who are victims or offenders, and staff. The incident should be reported to the police at the earliest opportunity.*

## PERIOD OF SUSPENSION

The maximum continuous period of time a student can be suspended at any one time is **five school days**. A student cannot be suspended for more than **15 days** in any school year.

If a student has been suspended for 15 school days in any one school year, an expulsion is **not** an automatic consequence.

## RELEVANT PERSON

A *relevant* person must be involved in the process of suspension to provide support to the student if the student is under 18 years of age or cognitively impaired.

The *relevant* person will usually be the parent/carer, but can be an adult nominated by the parent, or an adult identified as a *suitable person*.

### Process for Suspension

#### 1. Determining Appropriateness of Suspension

In determining if suspension is appropriate, the principal must give consideration to:

- the behaviour for which the student is being suspended
- the educational needs of the student
- any disability of the student
- the age of the student
- the residential and social circumstances of the student.

If suspension is judged appropriate by the school, it is recommended that it be for the shortest time necessary.

#### 2. Prior to Suspension

Before issuing a suspension, the principal must ensure:

- the student has had the opportunity to be heard
- any information provided by the student or relevant person has been taken into consideration
- other forms of action to address the behaviour for which the student is being suspended have been considered.

#### Catholic Education Office Ballarat Requirements

The principal must ensure accurate records/case notes are maintained. The principal is also required to contact their local educational consultant to inform him/her of the proposed suspension and, if appropriate, to seek further advice and/or support.

#### 3. Issuing a Suspension

##### a) In-school Suspension

When issuing an in-school suspension\*, schools should note:

- no more than half the time allocated for any recess is to be used for detention
- students must undertake supervised detention at a reasonable time and place
- where students are detained after school to complete meaningful work:
  - » parents must be informed at least the day before the detention
  - » the time of detention should not exceed forty-five minutes
  - » alternative measures should be negotiated with parents whose family circumstances are such that the student's completion of after-school work would create undue hardship.

*\*Detention is one form of in-school suspension. Students may also be present at school but not attending classes/activities.*

## b) External Suspension

Prior to an external suspension taking effect, or on the day of implementing a suspension with immediate effect, the principal must:

- provide verbal notification to the student
- notify the relevant person (either via phone or in person)
  - » the reason for the suspension
  - » the school days on which the suspension will occur
  - » the location of the suspension
- provide details for additional support services, as appropriate
- where the student is suspended for **three days or less**, provide meaningful work
- where the student is suspended for **more than three days**, develop a *Student Absence Learning Plan* and a *Return-to-School Plan*
- provide the student and the relevant person with a written Notice of Suspension. The notice must include:
  - » the reason for the suspension
  - » the school days on which the suspension will occur
  - » if the suspension is more than three days, provide the student and the relevant person with the *Student Absence Learning Plan* and the *Return-to-School Plan*.

### *Catholic Education Office Ballarat Requirements*

The principal is also required to contact their educational consultant and inform him/her of the proposed suspension and if appropriate seek further advice and/or support.

A meeting must be arranged between the principal and the parent(s)/guardian(s) to consider these and other related matters.

## c) A Suspension with Immediate Effect

The principal may issue a suspension with immediate effect where the student's behavior is such that they are putting the health, safety and wellbeing of themselves, or any other person, at significant risk.

In this instance, the principal may expel the student while they are on suspension, subject to the procedures for expulsion being followed.

When a student is suspended with immediate effect, the principal has a duty of care to provide supervision to the student:

- until the student is collected by the parent (or nominated emergency contact)
- if the student is in Out-of-Home Care, if the student cannot be collected by a parent, until the student is collected by an adult who is residing with, and providing care to, the student
- until the end of the school day
- until the conclusion of a school camp/excursion if the student cannot be collected by a parent or other adult.

### *Catholic Education Office Ballarat Requirements*

The principal is also required to contact their educational consultant and inform him/her of the immediate suspension and, if appropriate, to seek further advice and/or support.

### **Please note**

Any incident which results in suspension may be deemed a 'serious incident' and in such circumstances a report should be made via the School Injury/Incident Report form.

# Procedures for Expulsion

As noted in the previous section of these guidelines, 'Procedures for Suspension', Catholic Education Office Ballarat endorses the policy of the Victorian Department of Education and Training (DET) as outlined in the School Policy and Advisory Guide (Victorian Department of Education and Training 2014c) with regards to procedures for suspension and expulsion.

The information provided below also draws substantially on Ministerial Order No. 625 Procedures for Suspension and Expulsion for Government Schools in Victoria (Victorian Department of Education and Training 2014f). Matters that pertain specifically to Catholic schools in the Ballarat Diocese are noted in the procedural advice below.

## Key Information

Ministerial Order No. 625 sets the following parameters for the expulsion of students.

### AUTHORITY FOR EXPULSION

The principal has the authority to expel a student from the school of which he/she is the principal. In the Catholic school context, the parish priest/canonical administrator/governance authority **must** be informed.

### GROUNDS FOR EXPULSION

1. Subject to clauses 2 and 3 below, a principal may expel a student if the student:
  - behaves in such a way as to pose a danger, whether actual, perceived or threatened, to the health, safety or wellbeing of any person
  - causes significant damage to or destruction of property
  - commits, attempts to commit, or is knowingly involved in the theft of property
  - possesses, uses or sells, or deliberately assists another person to possess, use or sell illicit substances or weapons
  - fails to comply with any clear and reasonable instruction of a staff member so as to pose a danger- whether actual, perceived or threatened- to the health, safety or wellbeing of any person
  - consistently engages in behaviour that vilifies, defames, degrades or humiliates another
  - consistently behaves in an unproductive manner that interferes with the wellbeing, safety or educational opportunities of any other student.
2. The right to expel only applies if the student is engaged in the behaviour referred to in clause 1 above while at school or travelling to or from school or while engaged in any school activity away from the school (including travel to and from that activity).

*Some wrongful behaviours of a serious nature are by definition criminal offences. These may include criminal damage of property, possession of a weapon, theft, assault, assault with weapons, use, possession or distribution of drugs, sexual assault. This list is indicative only and not exhaustive.*

*When a principal determines that a serious criminal offence has occurred, the school needs to be mindful of all its duties of care, including those owed to students who are victims or offenders, and staff. The incident should be reported to the police at the earliest opportunity.*

### RELEVANT PERSON

A *relevant* person must be involved in the process to provide support to the student if the student is under 18 years of age or cognitively impaired.

The *relevant* person will usually be the parent/carer, but can be an adult nominated by the parent, or an adult identified as a *suitable person*.



## Vulnerable Students and Families

The DET policy on Procedures for Suspension and Expulsion for Government Schools in Victoria and the advice provided in its School Policy and Advisory Guide alert schools to special provisions that may apply where vulnerable students and families are concerned. Catholic Education Office Ballarat endorses these provisions and expects that Catholic schools will consider all additional avenues of support prior to determining that expulsion is appropriate.

Vulnerable students and families, and procedures that may apply to expulsion, are as follows:

- **Aboriginal and Torres Strait islander students.** When considering an expulsion for an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander student, a principal should consult with the Catholic Education Office Ballarat's Aboriginal and Torres Strait education officer. The education officer can support the school and the family to find the best outcome for the student and also connect the school and family to any local or regional resources to assist.
- **Students with Disabilities (SWD).** When a student has a disability that is relevant to the expulsion process and may impact upon placement decisions, the educational consultant should be notified to contribute to support and planning.
- **Students with separated parents.** For students who have separated parents, it is important to remember that expulsion is a serious disciplinary measure and therefore all parents and carers are entitled to be notified of the intention to expel the student.

## Process for Expulsion

### 1. Determining Appropriateness of Expulsion

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In determining whether to expel a student, the principal must properly, fairly and without bias consider all of the relevant matters in making the decision. The principal must determine whether the expulsion is appropriate when compared to:

- the behaviour for which the student is being expelled
- the educational needs of the student
- any disability of the student
- the age of the student
- the residential and social circumstances of the student.

### *Catholic Education Office Ballarat Requirements*

The principal must also be satisfied that there have been sufficient interventions and strategies used prior to the decision to expel, and that documented evidence exists of those interventions.

### 2. Prior to Expulsion

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#### Behaviour Review Conference

- The principal is required to convene a Behaviour Review Conference
- The purpose of the Behaviour Review Conference is to:
  - » advise the student and their relevant person that the principal is considering whether to expel the student
  - » outline the grounds for expulsion that are being considered and the evidence to support a finding that the student has engaged in relevant conduct
  - » ensure that the student and their relevant person (where the student is under 18 years of age or cognitively impaired) has the opportunity to be heard
  - » identify the future educational, training and / or employment options most suited to the student's needs and agree on a course of action in the event expulsion is decided.(See section 4 below – Continuing Education).
- The principal must notify the student and the relevant person within 48 hours of the Behaviour Review Conference of the decision regarding expulsion.

### *Catholic Education Office Ballarat Requirements*

In parish or regional schools, the principal must provide the parish priest/canonical administrator/ governance authority (as appropriate) with formal written notification of the intended expulsion and the reason for it, and seek endorsement.

In addition, the principal must also provide the educational consultant with formal written notification of the intended expulsion and the reasons for it and seek endorsement.

### 3. Decision Regarding Expulsion

If the principal decides to expel the student, the principal must provide the student and the relevant person with the following:

- a Notice of Expulsion, which must include:
  - » the ground/s for the expulsion
  - » the reason/s for the expulsion
  - » the date of the commencement of the expulsion
  - » that the student has a right to appeal the expulsion decision
  - » details of the Review and/or Appeal process.

Subsequently, the principal is to prepare an Expulsion Report, which must be in writing and contain:

- a short statement of the history of the student's time at the school
- the grounds for expulsion
- the reasons for expulsion
- any considerations in support of the expulsion, including a comprehensive range of strategies which might have been employed to date
- any representation made by the student or the relevant person
- a summary of options considered at the Behaviour Review Conference and why expulsion was considered necessary
- details of the arrangements that have been made for the continuing education, training and/or employment of the student
- recommendations on whether any further action either at the school, regional or system level is required, including strategies at the school level to prevent the repeat of similar circumstances.

### *Catholic Education Office Ballarat Requirements*

Both the Notice of Expulsion and the Expulsion Report is to be provided to your Educational Consultant within 24 hours of the expulsion taking effect.

### 4. Continuing Education

#### *Catholic Education Office Ballarat Requirements*

It is the responsibility of the principal to ensure that the student is provided with other educational and development opportunities.

In the first instance, a Negotiated Transfer (prior to expulsion) should be sought. Negotiated Transfer is an option in circumstances in which it is judged that the student's present school is not the right environment for the student, and that another setting would more suitably meet the student's current and future needs and be the most appropriate means of providing for the student's wellbeing.

The principal of the expelling school, together with the Educational Consultant, must ensure that the student is provided with alternative choices regarding educational and development opportunities as soon as practicable after the expulsion.

In the case of a **student of compulsory school age**, the principal must ensure that the student is participating as soon as practicable in one or more of the following options:

- enrolled at another registered school
- enrolled at a registered training organisation
- engaged in employment.

The principal, within reason, must provide the student with meaningful work, and monitor the completion of that work, until one of the above options is exercised.

In the case of a **student beyond compulsory school age**, the principal should provide the student and their relevant person with information about other schools, registered training organisations, or employment agencies that may provide suitable opportunities for the student.

## 5. Appeal Process

A student and his/her relevant person may appeal to the Educational Consultant the decision to expel. An expulsion appeal must be in writing (where possible) and received by the principal, within 10 school days of receiving the Notice of Expulsion.

A student can appeal the expulsion based on the following:

- the expulsion process was not followed by the principal
- the grounds on which the student was expelled are unfair
- there have not been sufficient prior interventions and strategies used prior to the decision to expel where the student has behavioural issues;
- Other extenuating circumstances.

Within 24 hours of receiving the appeal, the principal must provide the Educational Consultant and parish priest/canonical administrator/school governance authority with the:

- Notice of Expulsion
- Expulsion Report
- Expulsion Appeal correspondence.

The Educational Consultant, in consultation with and parish priest/canonical administrator/ school governance authority, may consider the establishment of an Expulsion Review Panel to review the principal's decision to expel the student. The purpose of the Expulsion Review Panel is to:

- provide an opportunity for the student and their relevant person to be heard
- provide a report outlining the relevant facts and considerations, and making a recommendation regarding the expulsion appeal.

Membership of the panel to consist of four of the following:

- Educational Consultant (chair)
- two persons, nominated by principal and Educational Consultant, who were not involved in the original decision
- parish priest/canonical administrator/member of governance authority.

The Educational Consultant should make a determination within **15 school days** of receiving the appeal and must verbally notify the student, their relevant person and the principal of the outcome of the decision within **24 hours** of the decision being made. Formal, written notification must be received within **three days**.

In the event the decision to expel the student is overturned, and this is accepted by the parish priest/canonical administrator/school governance authority. The following must occur as soon as possible:

- the student must be re-enrolled in the school
- the principal must work with the student, their relevant person and the student's teacher(s) to develop a Return-to-School Plan for the student
- the principal must ensure that the record of expulsion is removed from the student's permanent record
- once expulsion has been removed from the student's record, the principal must notify the student and their relevant person of this in writing.

# Appendix: Resources / Tools / Templates

- Student Behaviour Support Plan Template
- Student Behaviour Support Policy Template
- Staged Response Checklist
- Guidelines for Developing a Student Safety Plan
- Student Safety Plan Template
- Sample Letter: Notice of Suspension
- Sample Letter: Notice of Expulsion
- Sample Record of Negotiated Transfer
- Sample Record of Expulsion
- Sample Letter: Decision of Principal Following Expulsion Review

## Student Behaviour Support Plan Template

STUDENT: ..... YEAR LEVEL: .....

START DATE: ..... REVIEW DATE: .....

COORDINATOR: .....

This plan is committed to supporting the student in developing skills required for positive social interaction, in order to become a more successful learner, and to create a safe learning environment for all.

BACKGROUND: Information relating to factors that may be having an impact on the student
FORMAL ASSESSMENT/DIAGNOSIS: Details from any reports/previous recommendations
TARGETED BEHAVIOURS: Focus on one or two behaviours that are most prevalent and that are to be decreased. Be specific.
FUNCTION: What is the student trying to access or avoid in this behaviour? Consider the presenting behaviour in light of: Frequency; Intensity; Duration
SIGNS/INDICATORS: Student's expression/body language/statement prior to demonstration of behaviour
TRIGGERS: Are there influences that 'provoke/activate' the behaviour?
GOALS: SMART – exactly what replacement behaviour is desired?
PROACTIVE INTERVENTIONS: Aimed specifically at teaching the desired behaviours
IMPLEMENTED BY: Specific staff who will be responsible
EVALUATION: Specify how the changes of behaviour will be monitored.
FUTURE ACTION: What strategies will be constantly implemented in order to best support the student (e.g. 'Chill Out Zone')?

I have read this plan and commit to its implementation.

TEAM MEMBER	ROLE	TEAM MEMBER	ROLE
.....	.....	.....	.....
.....	.....	.....	.....
.....	.....	.....	.....

## Student Behaviour Support Policy Template

### RATIONALE

*Explains succinctly why the policy is being written and makes specific connections to the school's vision*

- School mission and vision
- Rights and responsibilities
- School values

### AIMS

*Describes the general intent of what the policy is intended to achieve*

- Teaching and learning
- Safe learning environments

### IMPLEMENTATION

*Details how the aims of the policy will be attained*

- Positive behaviour expectations
- Support systems
- Consequences for breaches

### SERIOUS INCIDENT

*Outlines the steps that will be taken following such an incident*

### EVALUATION

*States clearly when the policy will be reviewed*

## Staged Response Checklist

This checklist is reprinted with the permission of the Victorian Department of Education and Training (DET). It is recommended that schools use the Staged Response Checklist as a guide to help them consider, implement and document their responses to incidents of challenging behaviour (see Victorian Department of Education and Training 2014c).

### Stage 1: Prevention and early intervention – creating a positive school culture

SUGGESTED STRATEGIES	SCHOOL ACTIONS
Define and teach school-wide expectations for all.	
Establish relevant school-wide prevention programs.	
Establish consistent school-wide processes to identify students at risk of disengagement from learning.	
Establish consistent school-wide processes and programs for early intervention.	

### Stage 2: Intervention – a targeted response for individual students

SUGGESTED STRATEGIES	SCHOOL ACTIONS
Establish an understanding of the life circumstances of the child/ young person and how they feel.	
Establish data collection strategies.	
Develop the plan for improvement based on data and review regularly.	
Explicitly teach and/or build replacement behaviours.	
Determine strategies for the monitoring and measurement of student progress.	
Establish inclusive and consistent classroom strategies.	
Establish out-of-class support strategies.	
Establish a student support group.	

## Guidelines for Developing a Student Safety Plan

A Student Safety Plan should be viewed as an extension of the Behaviour Support Plan.

It is a set of procedures designed to keep safe the student concerned, other students and the staff who are involved. It will be implemented whenever required for a student who has demonstrated that his/her behaviour escalates to the point at which learning and teaching are severely interrupted and/or the safety of others is compromised. This behaviour will usually be presented as overt non-compliance, threatening conduct and/or verbal or physical aggression.

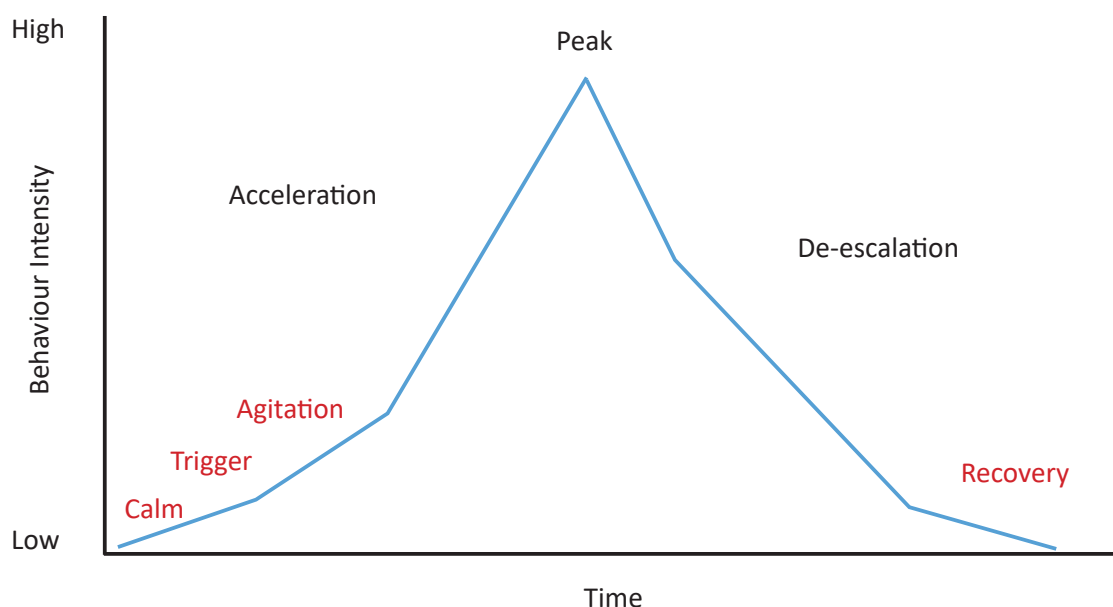
The plan must initially focus on identifying the function of the behaviour and any observed triggers. All resulting interventions must be based on the individual student's needs, aimed at prevention, and followed consistently by all those involved with the student.

In developing an effective Student Safety Plan, the following matters need to be considered:

- identification of how to intervene early in the escalation
- identification of environmental factors that can be manipulated
- identification of replacement behaviour/s that need to be taught
- the safety of all concerned.

The plan is based on Colvin's (2010) model of acting out behaviour which identifies the stages of escalation as:

Calm Trigger Agitation Acceleration Peak De-escalation Recovery



It is vital that adults involved at any stage of this behaviour are committed to remaining calm and supporting the student.



## Student Safety Plan Template

STUDENT: ..... YEAR LEVEL: .....

DATE OF PLAN: ..... COORDINATOR: .....

**This plan is committed to supporting the student on occasions when the behaviour escalates.**

### BEHAVIOUR SUPPORT TEAM MEMBERS

Ensure that all staff are informed of the processes to be followed to achieve a consistent approach.

STUDENT'S BEHAVIOUR	PLANNED RESPONSE
<b>FUNCTION:</b> Identify what the student is trying to access or avoid in/from this behaviour	Conduct a simplified Functional Behavioural Assessment (see Colvin 2010, PBIS World 2016).
<b>POTENTIAL TRIGGERS:</b> Identify the activators/ prompts to the problem behaviour	
<b>ESCALATION BEHAVIOURS:</b> Identify the signs/ indicators that often precede the problem behaviour	
<b>PROBLEM BEHAVIOURS:</b> Identify the behaviours that require intervention for student's safety or wellbeing and that of others	
<b>ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS:</b> Identify physical changes that can be made to ensure safety	
<b>DE-ESCALATION BEHAVIOURS:</b> Identify signs that the student is now calming	
<b>POST-INCIDENT BEHAVIOURS:</b> Identify signs that the student is now completely calm	
<b>DEBRIEF</b> with the student, reinforcing the desired appropriate behaviour and with the staff to check that the correct responses were implemented	
<b>REPLACEMENT BEHAVIOUR:</b> Identify skill/s to be taught	

**Sample Letter: Notice of Suspension**

*Guidelines for Student Support - Behaviour*

**NOTICE OF SUSPENSION**

SCHOOL LETTERHEAD

Date

Dear .....

This letter is written to confirm the notification that has already been shared personally with you by ..... of this school, in relation to a student behaviour matter concerning your son/daughter .....

It has been found necessary to require ..... to be suspended from school activities for a period of ..... The suspension will be from ..... until .....

The reason for the suspension is .....

The purpose of the suspension is (choose from grounds for suspension outlined on page 18 of these Student Behaviour Support Guidelines).

The nature of the suspension will be as follows. .... You are invited to attend a meeting with ..... here at school on .....

to discuss important matters related to the wellbeing of ..... [and other members of the school community]. At this meeting we will also be able to consider how best to assist ..... to return to school activities appropriately following the suspension, and what arrangements may be helpful for monitoring his/her progress into the future.

During the period of .....’s suspension, learning material and support will be provided for him/her by the school in the following manner: ..... Pastoral and legal responsibilities for ..... during that time will rest with you as his/her parent(s)/guardian(s).

Should the proposed meeting time not be suitable for you, you are welcome to contact ..... by phone on ..... to see if an alternative time can be arranged.

Yours sincerely,

Principal

**SAMPLE LETTER TO PARENT(S)/GUARDIAN(S)**

## Sample Letter: Notice of Expulsion

*Guidelines for Student Support - Behaviour*

### NOTICE OF EXPULSION

#### SAMPLE LETTER TO PARENT(S)/GUARDIAN(S)

SCHOOL LETTERHEAD

Date

Dear .....

This letter is written to confirm the notification that I have today shared personally with you, in relation to a very serious matter concerning your son/daughter .....

It is my decision that the enrolment of ..... as a student at ..... (name of school) is to be terminated, as of .....

This expulsion decision has been taken for the following reason(s):

.....  
.....  
.....

We have discussed these matters together in recent times, and there has been the opportunity for you to share with me your thoughts, concerns and hopes, and to speak on behalf of ....., within the context of a possible expulsion. My decision has been made after close consideration of these and all other relevant issues.

Despite these deeply regrettable circumstances, I express my hope that ..... is able to move forward, beyond this point, towards a fulfilling and positive future.

Formal processes are available for seeking an appeal of the expulsion decision. Details are as follows [or as attached].

Yours sincerely,

Principal

**Sample Record of Negotiated Transfer**

*Guidelines for Student Support - Behaviour*

**SAMPLE RECORD OF NEGOTIATED TRANSFER**

**CONFIDENTIAL DOCUMENT – SCHOOL FILE**

SCHOOL LETTERHEAD

**NEGOTIATED TRANSFER**

Negotiated Transfer involves a change of school by a student either between Catholic schools, or to a school within another sector, or to an alternative educational setting. In the case of students who are of post-compulsory school age, a wider range of options might be considered, for example a negotiated transfer, either temporary or permanent, to the workforce or to a higher education or training institute.

**RECORD OF NEGOTIATED TRANSFER FOR**

Name of Student: ..... of Year Level .....

1. In relation to this Negotiated Transfer, the following matters have been considered:
  - the reasons why a change to another setting was being proposed
  - the environment that would best provide for the student’s ..... emotional, social and spiritual needs
  - the school or other setting that would provide an educational program suited to the student’s needs, abilities and aspirations.
2. Consequently, it was decided to seek a Negotiated Transfer to (name of school or other setting):
3. Particular aspects of this new setting regarded as being suited to the needs of the student as outlined above are:
4. The process by which the Transfer has been negotiated is as follows: .....
5. The negotiation process has concluded successfully, with an agreement that the transfer be effective as of (date):
6. Consideration has been given to the support required by the student and the student’s parent(s)/guardian(s) in making this transition, and consequently it has been agreed that:
 

.....

**Signatures of Approval**

Parent(s)/Guardian(s):..... Date .....

Principal of exit school: ..... Date .....

Principal of accepting school: ..... Date .....

(or equivalent for alternative setting):..... Date .....

## Sample Record of Expulsion

*Guidelines for Student Support - Behaviour*

### SAMPLE RECORD OF EXPULSION

#### CONFIDENTIAL DOCUMENT – SCHOOL FILE

#### SCHOOL LETTERHEAD

#### EXPULSION

It is an expectation of the Catholic Education Office Ballarat that expulsion of a student from a Catholic school in the Ballarat Diocese will not occur except in the most serious of circumstances, and when the following conditions all apply:

- the student has engaged in wrongful behaviour of a serious nature and
- the school's other processes for addressing such behaviours have been applied and not been successful, and
- the welfare and safety of others in the school community, or the need to maintain order and protect the rights of others, make it necessary that the student no longer be present in that school community.

#### RECORD OF EXPULSION

1. It is hereby formally recorded that ..... (name of student) of .....
2. (Year Level), whose age is ..... has been expelled from .....name of school).
3. The expulsion is effective as of ..... (date and time).
4. The expulsion decision was taken for the following reason(s): .....
5. The student's parent(s)/guardian(s) have been formally notified of this decision and the reasons for it.

The student's parent(s)/guardian(s) have been advised of the formal processes available for seeking a Review of the expulsion decision, and also for lodging an Appeal. Details are as follows (or as attached).

.....

Signature of Principal ..... Date .....

**Sample Letter: Decision of Principal Following Expulsion Review**

*Guidelines for Student Support - Behaviour*

**DECISION OF PRINCIPAL FOLLOWING EXPULSION REVIEW**

Sample letter to:

- the person(s) who requested the review
- the Director of Catholic Education Ballarat
- The relevant congregational authority (if required)

SCHOOL LETTERHEAD

Date

Dear .....

This letter is written to notify my decision at the conclusion of the Expulsion Review Process in relation to student .....

Having conducted a formal Review of the Expulsion decision, the Review Panel has made its formal recommendation to me.

Having given serious consideration to the Expulsion Review Panel’s recommendation and its supporting argumentation, I must advise that my decision is that .....

[the expulsion will remain...or...]

the expulsion will be repealed, and ..... may return to school as of .....]

[Should you wish to lodge an Appeal against this decision, you will find details regarding the process available in this regard in the documentation provided in my previous letter [or as attached.]

Yours sincerely,

Principal

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