



Pastoral Care and Discipline Policies

Pastoral Care Policy

The Church teaches that the Catholic school should “guide men and women to human and Christian perfection.” Saint Mary MacKillop Colleges’ Pastoral Care Program creates structures by which students can do this.

The program is divided into four components:

- general introductory notes
- general care of students.
- care of individual students experiencing difficulties.
- care of student-groups and the student body as a whole.

General Introductory Notes:

This policy is an open document available to all parents, students, staff, and other interested parties. It is discussed with each student cohort at the commencement of each academic year and in conjunction with the “school expectations”. The policy applies to students at school, on the way to and from school, on school endorsed activities off campus, at events off campus and outside school hours that have a clear connection to the school, and when using mobile devices and technology with other students or staff for purposes connected to the school.

SMMC has clear and high school expectations that are supported by this policy and the disciplinary policy. The school rejects corporal punishment, but practises an ethical and evidence based approach to student behaviour that seeks to support and reinforce positive student behaviour, whilst providing a graduated approach to punitive measures that provide deterrence, behaviour modification, and restoration.

The notion of **procedural fairness** underpins the policies described below. In practice, procedural fairness is satisfied in different situations by different method, but core principles exist:

- The school has, maintains, communicates, and reviews its pastoral care and disciplinary policies
- Students are fully informed of the allegations against them
- Students are fully informed of the likely consequences of their actions
- Students and parents are provided an opportunity to provide an explanation or make representations
- Investigations are properly conducted, all parties are heard, and relevant submissions are considered
- The decision maker acts fairly and without bias
- Students may be allowed an advocate if appropriate
- Students are afforded privacy and confidentiality, where this does not prejudice the investigation
- An appeal process is available in the case of suspension and expulsion
- The school recognises its obligations to general safety and its mandatory obligations in serious and/or criminal matters

This policy assumes the high standard of teacher directed professional strategies that are expected and generally acts to deal with matters where this has failed to prevent poor behaviour. It is supported by data bases of more significant matters and should be read in conjunction with the **anti-bullying policy**. These policies will be reviewed annually or as required by the Principal.

General Care of Students:

The school has a code of Expectations pertaining to all students which describe in some detail the kinds of behaviours expected of students both inside and outside the classroom. These are consistent with Christian values and are based on the fundamental human virtues of Justice, Fortitude, Prudence and Temperance, relating these to personal presentation and comporment, application to learning, relations with teachers and fellow students, social interaction, (including during bus travel and other such public situations) and the use of media and technologies.

Behaviour Education:

Students who experience difficulties in complying with some aspect/s of the School Expectations are assisted to overcome these by means of :

- Individual counselling by teachers or Pastoral Care Coordinators.
- The application of corrective measures which include both incentives to improve and penalties to deter from negative behaviour.
- The organisation of regular Group Pastoral Care sessions.

Pastoral Care Coordinators:

These coordinators are senior teachers allocated to a specific body of students. A male teacher is responsible for the High school boys and a female teacher for the girls.

The Role of the Pastoral Care Coordinator is to deal with any individual students or groups of students who are:

- Experiencing social or academic difficulties.
- Manifesting negative behaviour of some kind.
- Causing damage or distress to other members of the school community.

Processes Followed:

The Pastoral Care Coordinator will do one or more of the following:

- Receive complaints about student behaviour from any teacher or member of the school community.
- Interview and counsel the student if the matter is not serious.
- Issue a monitoring card if deemed necessary.
- If the misbehaviour is persistent, then notifying the parents of the persistent behaviour.
- Issue a penalty such as a detention or recommend that a suspension be given, using the appropriate channels as laid down in the school's Discipline Policy.
- Issue timely reminders to staff and students of the need to observe the school's regulations and expectations.

Pastoral Care Sessions and positive reinforcement:

These are tutorial-type meetings of students, grouped according to age and sex. These are presided over by the relevant Pastoral Cares personnel. They are held regularly and centre on practical moral and social topics.

Opportunities are also provided individually and collectively to celebrate and reinforce positive behaviour through activities such as classroom based rewards, "signature points", pizza lunches, and Principal's Morning Tea.

Discipline Policy

The school's discipline policy exists as an arm of the Pastoral Care programme. It is designed to help students to grow in character and virtue and to safeguard the common good of the whole school community. St Mary MacKillop College and its staff categorically reject corporal punishment.

The school prohibits the use of corporal punishment in disciplining students attending the school. This prohibition applies to staff and non-staff on the campus or any sanctioned school event.

The school will ensure that procedural fairness will apply to the handling of issues under this policy. The practical elements of procedural fairness are explained in the general introductory notes. Specifically, the "right to an unbiased decision" requires that the student and their parents or carers know:

- the allegations related to a specific matter and what other matters may be taken into account
- the process by which the matter will be considered
- how they may respond to the matter
- how they may seek a review of the matter in some circumstances
- there will be an absence of bias in the investigation and decision-making.

Definitions:

Unacceptable Behaviour

Behaviour which is not acceptable at SMMC includes but is not limited to behaviour which:

- Constitutes refusal to participate in the education programme.
- Constitutes disobedience to instructions which regulate the conduct of students.
- Is likely to impede significantly the learning of the other students.
- Is illegal
- Causes or is likely to cause damage to persons (including moral or psychological damage) or property.
- Is likely to bring the College, and/or the student, into disrepute.

Detention:

- This is any period when a student is detained at school or in a particular class in the student's 'non-class' time (recess, lunchtime, recreation time) or excluded from normal classes (or from a particular class, pending negotiated conditions for re-entry).
- The reasons for detention are occasional breaches of class or school protocols, which require a penalty. A detention is only given after a warning is issued.
- The detention is given by one or more teachers – or by the Principal.
- Productive activities or school work are provided for the student on detention by the teacher/s issuing the penalty.

Monitoring Card:

At the suggestion of the Pastoral Care Coordinator and the decision of the Principal, a student or students whose negative behaviour has become too frequent, may be asked to carry to all classes, a monitoring card on which their level of behaviour is recorded. This card may be imposed for one or more weeks at the discretion of the Pastoral Care Coordinator with the agreement of the Principal.

Suspension:

- This occurs in the case of a more serious or prolonged instance of unacceptable behaviour and involves the withdrawal of students from attending normal classes/activities for a defined period of time. The Principal may use suspension as a tool of behaviour management and/or to intervene when a behaviour poses a risk to the student or others in the school environment.
- When assessing the **grounds for suspension**, a Principal must consider a number of issues related to the wellbeing of the student and the school. The grounds for suspension may include but are not

limited to: continued/persistent disobedience, malicious damage to property, verbal abuse, bullying and cyberbullying, misuse of technology, and discrimination against others. In matters which involve a clear and imminent danger, the Principal may consider issuing an immediate suspension. This may be the case if drugs, weapons, physical violence, sexual harassment, or behaviour that would be referred to the NSW Police, Office of the Children's Guardian (OCG), or the Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ).

- Generally, the steps in a suspension will involve: a teacher/student **notifying** the Pastoral Care Assistant, the PCA notifying the Principal, the Principal/PCA/other relevant teachers **considering a decision** to proceed with a suspension, determining the **type and length** of suspension, **notifying** the student/parents/relevant staff of the suspension, considering the **needs** of the student and others affected by the suspension, and appropriate **resolution** of the suspension. In all of these steps, the guidelines of **Procedural Fairness** must be followed, including the possible right to **appeal**. It is essential that the student, parents, and relevant teachers are all appropriately informed of the process.
- **A Short Suspension** is suspension from school for 1-3 days.
- **An Extended suspension** is suspension for 4 or more days up to a maximum of 20 school days.
- **An Internal suspension** is where the student attends school but does not attend activities, classes, or shared breaks. **An External Suspension** involves excluding the student from the school campus and activities that may be conducted off campus.
- A student may be excluded from a particular class for a length of time, the conditions for return to class negotiated with the class teacher and the principal.
- The decision to make the suspension internal or external is made by the Principal in consultation with relevant staff in accord with the particular needs of the student as well as those of the school.
- The Principal must approve all periods of suspension after consulting with the relevant staff
- An extended suspension requires the approval of the Executive.
- Pastoral Care procedures are put in place to assist the student to reflect on their behaviour and amend it.
- Parents are to be informed in writing of any penalties issued to their children over and above detentions.
- Suitable work is set for the student to complete during detentions and suspensions.
- If a student accumulates three or more suspensions and/ or the student's behaviour is completely unacceptable, negotiations begin with a view to terminating the student's enrolment. These take place between the parents and the school executive and School Chaplain. The School Executive will make the final decision as to whether or not a further opportunity is to be given to the student.

Expulsion:

This occurs when a student's attendance at school is permanently withdrawn on the authority of the Executive. It involves a permanent termination of the contracts entered into at enrolment by the parent/s.

Expulsion is deemed necessary when the student's behaviour is completely unacceptable, other disciplinary measures have failed, or are inappropriate, or there is no reasonable hope that the behaviour will be rectified. Written records must be kept in the school of the details relating to penalties issued to students from Detention through to Expulsion.

Procedural Fairness:

The school will take every reasonable step to ensure that procedural fairness is applied to significant breaches of the school expectations, especially where suspension or expulsion may be considered. The core principles of this are described in the general introductory notes and will be applied differently in different situations, as described by the High Court of Australia and supported by NESAs in their *policy requirements guide*. These principles act to avoid the possibility of practical injustice.

Request for Review:

Where a student has been suspended or expelled, parents and where applicable, the students, may request a review of the decision within 28 days. This must be done in writing, setting out the grounds for the appeal. It should be addressed to the Principal and to the Directors. The appeal will be reviewed by the Executive of the school and School Chaplain and the final decision made by the Executive.