Melbourne Archdiocese Catholic Schools

St John's Mitcham Student Behaviour Policy

St John's Mitcham is a school which operates with the consent of the Catholic Archbishop of Melbourne and is owned, operated and governed by Melbourne Archdiocese Catholic Schools Ltd (MACS).

Purpose

This policy sets out the requirements to support students' behavioural, educational and emotional engagement to enable flourishing learners. This Policy should be read in conjunction with all school policies and the CECV Positive Behaviour Guidelines 2018.

Scope

This policy applies to all students, families, and staff of St John's Mitcham.

Principles

St John's Mitcham strives to build a safe and positive school environment that is guided by Gospel values and honours the dignity of the individual, the family, and the school.

At St John's Mitcham we strive to provide an inclusive education which values equity and diversity and celebrates difference. Equity and diversity are enacted through a pedagogy of inclusion and a commitment to uphold the rights of all to be welcomed, valued, acknowledged, and actively engaged in education. Our learning community is committed to processes that support all students to make optimal progress and respect the rights of all students to learn in a positive and supportive environment. We seek to take a proactive and preventative approach to the successful participation of students using a multi-tiered system of support. This approach, aligned with the CECV Intervention Framework Guidelines, looks to intervene as early as possible when students are not actively engaged in learning from a strengths-based perspective. Student behaviour is linked to the quality of the learning experiences. Purposeful, authentic, and relevant learning experiences that are of a sufficiently challenging yet achievable standard maximise positive behaviour.

As the faith community leader in the school, the principal endeavours to foster a safe and supportive environment that respects the rights of all students to learn, the rights of all teachers to teach and the rights of all members of the school community to be safe. It is important that the school is made fully aware of each child's individual circumstances and the interaction with their physical, functional, emotional, or educational needs, particularly where the school is required to provide additional support to the child.

The development and promotion of high-quality relationships are responsibilities shared by all members of the school community. Teachers, students, families, parish members and the wider community contribute to and share in the responsibility to foster life-affirming relationships that recognise and support the inherent dignity and safety of each person.

This policy is intended to guide our school's actions. It has been developed in consultation with the school community and seeks to prioritise respectful relationships and safety in response to the rights and needs of all members of the school community.

Policy

St John's Mitcham recognises the importance of providing clear guidance and expectations which are applicable to all members of the school community. Appendix 1 sets out the school's expectations for its students, parents/guardians/carers, and staff.

Attendance expectation

St John's Mitcham has a legal requirement to ensure student attendance each day. This is also a shared expectation of students, parents/guardians/carers and the wider school community, focusing on positive and pro-social behaviours together with prevention and early intervention.

St John's Mitcham recognises the importance of providing clear guidance on regular student attendance to all members of the school community. Student engagement, regular attendance and positive behaviours will be supported through respectful relationship-based whole-school practices, as well as targeted and individualised support when required. The focus on relational and engaging learning environments fosters meaningful and personalised approaches, increasing student connection, engagement, and wellbeing. Please refer to the Attendance Policy for attendance expectations.

Support for serious and unacceptable student behaviour

Effective student behaviour support is enhanced through internally-based school support structures, and externally-based family, education, community and interagency partnerships. The school will apply a range of supports and measures to address serious and unacceptable student behaviour, in line with CECV Intervention Framework.

Where a student acts in breach of the behaviour standards of our school community, the school will institute a staged response, in accordance with the CECV Positive Behaviour Guidelines 2018.

Where applicable, an incident report will be completed and provided to the principal or relevant staff member, noting the templates provided in the CECV Positive Behaviour Guidelines. Appendix 2 sets out the school's strategies and support to reinforce accepted behaviour.

As every child's educational needs can change over time, it will often be necessary for the school to review any additional assistance that is being provided to the child, in consultation with parents/guardians/carers and the child's treating medical/allied health professionals, to assess:

- whether the additional assistance remains necessary and/or appropriate to the child's needs
- whether the additional assistance is having the anticipated positive effect on the child's ability to regulate, individual physical, functional, emotional or educational goals
- whether additional specialised assistance or further specialised advice is required
- whether it remains within the school's ability to continue to provide the additional assistance, given any limitations that may exist.

St John's Mitcham will implement positive behaviour support strategies and undertake actions to prevent the need for the use of restraint or seclusion in accord with the CECV Positive Behaviour Guidelines 2018. If a student is placed in a separate room as a means of regulation support, staff will maintain active supervision of the student.

Parameters around Restraint or Seclusion Use

The use of restraint or seclusion does not form part of any of St John's Mitcham Behaviour Support Plans or Student Safety Plan. However, there are limited circumstances in which restraint or seclusion may be deemed appropriate.

In deciding to implement any form of restraint or seclusion, St John's Mitcham staff are aware that their actions may directly increase the risk of injury and trauma, both for the student and for the staff member themselves. Such decisions are usually made in times of high stress. Actions that may be considered reasonable will be made by the staff present and will depend on the individual circumstances of each case as a matter of professional judgment.

Restraint and seclusion will only be used in limited emergency situations, as outlined below:

1. The student's behaviour poses an imminent threat of physical harm or danger.
2. The action is reasonable in all the circumstances.
3. There is no less restrictive means of responding in the circumstances.

If restraint or seclusion is used, the least restrictive form of restraint/seclusion will be used for the minimum time possible. The restraint/seclusion will cease as soon as the immediate danger for the student or others is averted.

The clear priority when managing such an incident will be the safety of all concerned. St John's Mitcham staff involved in an incident of restraint or seclusion will immediately notify the principal and provide for the immediate care and safety of those concerned. The student's parents/guardians/carers will be contacted. A post-incident evaluation and report will be completed in accord with the templates and processes outlined in the CECV Positive Behaviour Guidelines 2018.

To assist the school to discharge its safety responsibilities, St John's Mitcham will adhere to an occupational health and safety program through which potential safety hazards are identified and analysed in terms of the likelihood of an event occurring, and the potential consequences if the event was to occur.

The use of corporal punishment is expressly prohibited at St John's Mitcham and under the *Education and Training Reform Act 2006* (Vic).

Breach of Student Code of Conduct

Students whose behaviour breaches the school policies, or the Student Code of Conduct may be sanctioned by the class teacher or school principal as deemed appropriate given the nature of the breach and the age of the student.

In cases of serious and/or persistent breaches of school policy or student code of conduct, the CECV Positive Behaviour Guidelines 2018 outlines the process for managing and addressing student misbehaviour. The St John's Mitcham policies and procedures for the suspension, negotiated transfer of students, and expulsion of students outline the management of suspension and expulsion, and appeals processes.

A decision to suspend, transfer, or expel a student is determined only:

- on prescribed grounds
- in accordance with prescribed procedures outlined in the policy and guidelines
- if procedural fairness requirements are satisfied
- if the requirements of the school's Suspension Policy, Negotiated Transfer Policy or Expulsion Policy are met, where applicable.

In accordance with applicable legislation and the school's Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy, the police, Families and Children's Services within the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (DFFH), Commission for Children and Young People (CCYP), and/or other relevant bodies will be informed of any unlawful breaches.

Complaints

St John's Mitcham is required to maintain a fair, effective, and efficient complaints-handling process so that complaints about the school can be addressed. If a parent/guardian/carer of the student would like to make an appeal on student behaviour processes, parents/guardians/carers can raise the concerns with the principal or relevant person either in writing or by making an appointment.

Please ensure the relevant person/s is given a reasonable amount of time to take the steps required to resolve or address the concerns. Please refer to the school's complaints handling policy and/or guidelines for further information. If the matter cannot be resolved at the school level, or if the complaint is about the principal of the school, complainants are advised to contact the relevant MACS Regional Office. Alternatively, parents/guardians/carers may lodge a complaint online and read the MACS Complaint Handling policy at https://www.macs.vic.edu.au/Contact-Us/Complaints.aspx.

Roles, responsibilities, and reporting

Role	Responsibility	Reporting requirement (if applicable)
Principal	Ensure publication of the school's Student Behaviour policy and procedures	Annual attestation to the Executive Director
Principal	Monitor compliance with this policy	Complete an OHS online report for any incident

Procedures

School-based processes and guidelines

Definitions

Appropriate behaviour

Behaviour that is suitable for a public gathering, respecting the other members of the forum (class, meeting, assembly, gathering) and treating others as you would wish to be treated. Members are encouraged to take responsibility for their actions and to show mutual respect, maturity, and common sense. In general, appropriate behaviour is any behaviour that contributes to the positive learning environment and aligns with our school rules, codes of conduct and behavioural expectations.

At risk behaviour

Any behaviour that has the potential to cause harm or injury to self or other. This includes physical, emotional, or psychological harm or behaviour that significantly disrupts the educational program.

Behaviour

The way in which one acts or conducts oneself, especially towards others. In general terms, it can be anything we say or do.

Bullying

May generally be characterised as offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour, an abuse or misuse of power through means that undermine, humiliate, denigrate or injure the recipient. Bullying generally involves a series or pattern of events in which one individual has demonstrated unacceptable behaviour towards another individual. Please refer to [Insert School Name]'s Anti-Bullying Policy for further details.

Catholic Education Commission of Victoria Ltd (CECV)

The overarching, strategic-planning and policy-making body for the Catholic school system in Victoria, including MACS schools.

Challenging behaviour

Behaviour that significantly challenges the day-to-day functioning of the school. The behaviour impacts on learning and interrupts students' and staff's capacity to feel safe or function in a safe and orderly environment

Criminal offences

Unacceptable behaviour that may be serious enough to constitute a criminal offence. If **St John's Mitcham** becomes aware that an offence has been or may have been committed, these concerns will be reported to the police or other authorities, as appropriate.

Discriminatory conduct

Conduct whereby an individual is treated less favourably based on a relevant attribute, including their sex, race, sexual orientation, age, disability, religion, physical appearance or belief or gender reassignment. Such action may constitute discriminatory conduct that is contrary to Commonwealth and Victorian anti-discrimination legislation.

Expulsion

Expulsion involves the termination of the contract entered into at the time of the enrolment by the parent/guardian/carer/relevant persons.

Inappropriate behaviour or unacceptable behaviour (including bullying, harassment, and victimisation)

May involve actions, words or physical gestures that could reasonably be perceived to be the cause of another person's distress or discomfort. Unacceptable behaviour does not have to be face-to-face, and may take many forms such as gestures, written, telephone or e-mail communications or through social media or technology platforms.

Negotiated Transfer

Negotiated transfer involves a documented and mutually agreed move of a student to another school and occurs when all other pastoral and discipline measures, including suspension, have failed to resolve an issue of serious inappropriate student behaviour. A negotiated transfer ends the enrolment agreement with the first school and requires an enrolment in another school.

Physical restraint

The use of force to prevent, restrict or subdue the movement of a student's body or part of their body where the student is not free to move away. Restraint does not include protective physical interventions, which involve physical contact to block, deflect or redirect a student's actions, or disengage from a student's grip.

Seclusion

The solitary confinement of a person in a room or area from which their exit is prevented by a barrier or another person. Seclusion includes situations where a person is left alone in a room or area and reasonably believes that they cannot leave that room or area even if they may physically be able to (e.g., the door is not locked). In extreme circumstances, e.g., in response to behaviours that cause harm to self or others, teachers will respond by exiting the other students from the learning space to ensure their safety. Where the student continues to display threatening and dangerous behaviour (e.g., wielding a bat), staff will seek to limit harm to others by isolating the student for the minimum amount of time required for the student to calm. Seclusion does not include the use of a safe place, time out or chill-out rooms, being conditions that are set up to support the student and often included in Behaviour Support Plans.

Suspension

Suspension occurs when a student's attendance at school is temporarily withdrawn on the authority of the principal or their delegate, for a set period of time.

Withdrawing privileges

Withdrawing student privileges can act as a consequence of breaching classroom or school behavioural standards. Specific privileges withdrawn may vary between students based on the individual student's support plan, however they may include things such as representing the school at inter-school sports or attendance at a school event. This must be time-limited and the risk to the student's engagement should be taken into account. The student must be told why privileges are withdrawn, and how they should behave for privileges to be reinstated.

Withdrawal from class

If a student's behaviour significantly interferes with the rights of other students to learn or the capacity of a teacher to teach a class or where there is possibility of harm to others, that student may be temporarily removed from regular classroom activities. In more serious cases the student may be required to leave the classroom for a specified period. Schools have a duty of care to ensure that students are always supervised, including when they are removed from a class. Where appropriate, parents/guardians/carers will be informed of such withdrawals. Withdrawal from class does not constitute formal school exclusion such as suspension (including in-school suspension) or expulsion.

Related policies and documents

Supporting documents

Appendix 1: Shared Behaviour Expectations
Appendix 2: Strategies for Positive Reinforcement of Appropriate Behaviour
Behaviour Support Plan – Template
Student Safety Plan – Template

Related MACS policies and documents

Anti-Bullying Policy (including cyberbullying)
Attendance Policy
Complaints Handling Policy
Duty of Care Policy
Expulsion of Students Policy
Negotiated Transfer of Students Policy
Occupational Health and Safety Policy
Pastoral Care of Students Policy
Suspension of Students Policy

Resources

CECV Positive Behaviour Guidelines 2018.
CECV Safe and Sound Practice Guidelines

Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority (VRQA) policy requirements
National Safe Schools Framework http://www.education.gov.au/national-safe-schools-framework-0
eXxcel: Wellbeing for Learning in Catholic School Communities
Health Promoting Schools Framework www.ahpsa.org.au
CECV Intervention Framework 2015 www.cecv.catholic.edu.au/publications/CECV-Intervention-Framework.pdf

Legislation and standards

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

Policy information table

Responsible director	Director, Learning and Regional Services
Policy owner	General Manager, Learning Diversity
Approving authority	Executive Director
Assigned board committee	Child Safety and Risk Management
Approval date	October 2023
Risk rating	High
Date of next review	March 2025
Publication details	CEVN, school contextualised policy on school website

POLICY DATABASE INFORMATION	
Assigned framework	Care, safety and welfare of students
Supporting documents	Refer to the list of supporting documents above (appendices, procedures, forms, etc)
Superseded documents	Student Behaviour Policy – v2.0 – 2022 Student Behaviour Policy – v1.0 – 2022
New policy	

Appendix 1: Shared Behaviour Expectations

The school recognises the importance of providing clear guidance and expectations which are applicable to all members of the school community.

The table below sets out our school's expectations for its students, parents/guardians/carers and staff.

Students are expected to:	Parents/guardians/carers are expected to:	Principal/teachers and staff will:
Take responsibility for their learning and have high expectations in themselves that they can learn	Have high expectations of their child's behaviour, understand, and support the implementation of the school's behavioural expectations	Promote positive reinforcement and enhance student self-esteem by having a planned approach for recognising and responding to appropriate behaviour
Model the school's core values of respect, endeavour, communication, trust and teamwork	Openly communicate with the school regarding their child's circumstances	Deliver an inclusive and comprehensive curriculum which promotes positive behaviours and emphasises the wellbeing of every child focusing on pro-social behaviours
Take responsibility for their own behaviour and the impact of their behaviour on others	Cooperate with the school by assisting in the development and enforcement of strategies to address individual needs	Employ whole school and classroom practices to establish a climate in which appropriate behaviour is the norm for all students and focus on the implementation of preventative and early intervention strategies to deal with attendance and behavioural issues
Comply with this policy and work with teachers and parents in developing strategies to improve outcomes to: • obey all reasonable requests of staff • respect the rights of others to be safe and learn • respect the property of others.	Provide complete, accurate and up to date information when completing an enrolment form and supply the school, prior to and during enrolment, with any additional information as may be requested, including copies of documents such as medical/specialist reports (where relevant to the child's schooling), reports from previous schools, court orders or parenting agreements	Consistently apply this Policy through a shared collegiate understanding and only exclude students in extreme circumstances
	Comply with the school's behaviour aims and the school's Code of Conduct and to support the school in upholding prescribed standards of dress, appearance and behaviour, in accordance with the terms of your child's enrolment at the school.	Plan for the professional development needs of all staff to enable them to develop and maintain positive relationships with their students, to understand the diverse circumstances of students and provide support to those who are vulnerable or who have special needs.
	Acknowledge and understand that unacceptable behaviour by a child, or repeated behaviour by a parent or guardian that, in the school's view, is unacceptable and damaging to the partnership between parent/guardian/carer and school, may result in suspension or termination of the child's enrolment.	Recognise that for some students (including vulnerable students or students with disabilities) additional support may be needed in the form of staged responses and staff are committed to working with families to reintegrate students in an educational setting after exclusion

Appendix 2: Positive Reinforcement of Appropriate Behaviour

St John's Mitcham will implement culturally inclusive strategies to reinforce appropriate behaviour which may include verbal recognition, individual or class rewards, communication with parents/wider school community, as appropriate.

Tier 1: School wide supports

St John's Mitcham implements culturally inclusive, school-wide preventative and early intervention strategies and practices for all its students to support positive behaviours, including:

- establishing predictable, fair, and democratic classrooms and school environments
- providing physical environments that are conducive to positive behaviours and effective engagement in learning
- ensuring student participation in the development and implementation of whole school expectations
- empowering students by creating opportunities to take responsibility and be involved in decision making
- monitoring attendance and academic progress of students with the view to recognising students at risk and intervening early
- developing Personalised Learning Plans (PLP) in consultation with the Program Support Group (PSG) where appropriate for individual students.

Tier 2: Targeted supports

In addition to Tier 1 supports, some students may require targeted support or interventions to meet behavioural standards, including regular attendance. These students will be supported through a culturally appropriate staged response, including:

- understanding the student's background and needs
- ensuring a clear understanding of expectations by both students and teachers
- provision of consistent school and classroom environments
- scaffolding the student's learning program
- data collection and documentation of incidents relating to the management of student behaviours to inform decision making
- revision of the Personalised Learning Plan (PLP) and creation of a Behaviour Support Plan (BSP), Student Safety Plan (SSP) or Attendance Maximisation Plan (AMP) as appropriate
- parent consultation via phone, videoconference, or interview
- the design and implementation of support strategies that assist the student to self-calm such as a quiet space or designated alternative area that they can go to if they are feeling overwhelmed
- case conference with relevant medical or specialist providers or MACS consultants (this may include Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander or EAL/New Arrival/Refugee Learning Consultants where culturally appropriate).

Tier 3: Intensive intervention

When Tier 1 and Tier 2 systems are in place, the foundation for implementing Tier 3 supports is established. Complex behaviours are targeted to remediate and prevent further escalations. Support provided to students at St John's Mitcham will be aligned directly with the goals and targets set out in the students' Personalised Learning Plan (PLP), Behaviour Support Plan (BSP) and Student Safety Plan (SSP). Data systems provide school personnel with accurate, timely and practical information for making decisions about the fidelity and impact of individualised interventions that:

- value the student and support positive interaction
- have a clear data-informed strategy focused on preventing the occurrence of an identified behaviour by avoiding or adapting the circumstances that usually trigger this behaviour
- focus on building skills and developing alternative behaviours

- consider the motivation for or functions of behaviours
- use the student's strengths and interests to promote success.

St John's Mitcham will implement more intensive intervention strategies for students presenting with complex and ongoing difficulties or extended school refusal. Development of plans will require support from parents/carers and will often require consent to access specialised services.

St John's Mitcham will support students with complex behaviours of concern through a culturally appropriate staged response which will generally include:

- ongoing implementation of universal and Tier 2 strategies
- use of data to inform and monitor the implementation of evidence-based interventions
- regular Program Support Group meetings to review PLP, BSP, safety plans and/or Attendance Maximisation Plans
- consultations with mutually agreed specialised support services
- implementation of explicit, data informed strategies designed to support the student to display safe behaviours. The design of the individualised support will be informed by the identified function of the behaviour and the explicit teaching of skills and desired behaviours.

Consequences for student misbehaviour

St John's Mitcham adopts a staged response to challenging behaviour and appropriate reinforcement of appropriate behaviour noting that an effective Behaviour Support Plan (BSP) is developed to support the student in learning skills required for positive social interaction, along with the ability to become a more effective and successful learner. Consequences for misbehaviour are also implemented which may take the form of:

- non-verbal warning – e.g. eye contact/hand movement/shake of head/teacher positioning to stand near misbehaving student/s
- verbal warning which identifies the misbehaviour and gives student the opportunity to change his/her behaviour
- moving student in the room to a less disrupting situation
- separating student from the class for a short period of time to provide an opportunity for the student to settle
- readmission to class activity based on student being de-escalated
- student required to stay in after class for set period of time
- student required to complete work during recess/lunchtime
- student engaged in restorative actions supervised by classroom teacher
- student re-entry meeting.

When concerns arise about a student's on-going behaviour or when a student is displaying chronic patterns of problem behaviour, St John's Mitcham will implement a targeted response to identify and address the presenting issues and reinforce replacement behaviours. This may involve the following support strategies:

- convening a Program Support Group (PSG) meeting involving parents/guardians/carers, Learning Diversity/Wellbeing coordinator and the student where appropriate
- Developing/revising a Personalised Learning Plan (PLP) or attendance plan
- development/revision of a Behaviour Support Plan (BSP) and/or Safety Plan where appropriate for individual students
- referral to MACS or external health or allied health providers
- consultation with external professionals, paediatrician, psychologist specialist practitioner
- contact with the regional office.