Behaviour Management Policy

(Feb 2020)

1. Background

The Little Yarra Steiner School aims to create a safe and positive learning environment, which encourages student initiative and responsibility whilst providing opportunities to build on strengths and develop their talents. Students flourish when they are happy, healthy and safe and when there is a positive school culture to support them. This interdependent relationship between student wellbeing and student learning is fundamental to students' positive and successful engagement with their education.

Positive behaviours are most effectively supported through relationship-based whole-school and classroom practices. Students are best supported in calm, consistent and predictable learning environments that recognise their individual needs and provide appropriate support. For most children and young people, the development of pro-social behaviour is achieved in stages and requires reinforcement and acknowledgement to support each step towards positive improvement. At all stages positive strategies and restorative practices are used. Procedural fairness is to be observed at all times, and the school will ensure that the application of its behaviour policy is fair, consistent and non-discriminatory.

The Little Yarra Steiner School absolutely prohibits the use of corporal punishment under any circumstances.

This policy is to be read in conjunction with the Student Code of Conduct. It is made available to all new parents as part of the enrolment process and also on the school's website.

2. Prevention

Implementing preventative strategies is a key part of the Behaviour Management Policy. These strategies:

• demonstrate school-wide pro-social expectations

• include age-appropriate school-wide classroom practices

• provide feedback and evaluation for individual students. This can also take place as part of their IEP where one is in place.

• empower students by creating multiple opportunities for them to take responsibility and be involved in their own learning

• Support the student's experience of feeling recognised, belonging and being valued by others

• Reinforce the understanding that mistakes are acceptable and a necessary part of learning.

3. Approach to promoting a safe and respectful environment

We seek to promote a safe and respectful environment as well as build a culture of respect and reverence, free from bullying or harassment, through:

- Active promotion of positive personal, interpersonal and civic values through the content of the curriculum delivered throughout the school;

- Conscious modelling of positive and respectful behaviour between teachers as colleagues, between teachers and students, and between teachers and parents;

- Regular professional development and discussion (internally and externally) with regard to teacher support and pedagogical inspiration, positive and effective behaviour management strategies, development of effective and engaging teaching practices and future vision for the school;

- Use of oral narrative/drama/literature to promote the importance of positive values as a necessity for a healthy social life, and the value of social difficulties as an opportunity for personal growth and development;

- Faculty meetings that promote greater understanding of a child - their social, emotional and academic learning - and development of methods and strategies of support;

- Outside of class times and during school opening hours, supervision of students is maintained through an adequate yard duty roster;

- Conscious awareness of potential risks to child safety in activities, including excursions, camps, and work experience (inclusive of any pertinent legislation);

- Promotion of an appropriate, balanced and healthy use of media and computer technology, that discourages exposure to material of a violent or sexual nature;

- Home visits by teachers in the lower primary school to better understand the familial connections of the child, and to facilitate a smoother transition between home and school environments;

- Use of assemblies to promote celebration of achievements, sharing of knowledge, positive values of respect and reverence for others, and, where appropriate, the promotion of guidelines of acceptable and non-acceptable behaviour;

- Sharing of seasonal and religious festivals to promote a greater depth of understanding and reverence for the world, and a sense of belonging to a valuable school community;

- Regular parent/teacher meetings where child or adolescent development and the work undertaken in the class is discussed and considered;

- Encouragement of students to take responsibility for their classmates and other students and their environment through working together in the garden, cleaning the classroom, and collaboratively completing various educational activities;

- Use of a variety of learning environments that promotes collaboration, environmental understanding, empathy, social and self awareness.

4. Student Code of Conduct

At The Little Yarra Steiner School we value respectful relationships and a shared responsibility for our learning environments. Our Student Code of Conduct ensures our learning spaces are friendly, equitable and safe places to learn and grow.

Social and learning guidelines are a key part of creating a positive and consistent learning environment for all students. Teachers wishing to establish expectations for their classroom or playground area will use the Student Code of Conduct and ensure that their expectations and sanctions are appropriate to the age, ability and developmental stage of their students. The focus and intention of our Student Code of Conduct is to foster the progressive and age appropriate development of self-discipline in the students.

Consequences for disruptive, unsafe, off task or disrespectful behaviour will be appropriate to the child and in proportion to the behaviour. Sanctions must be fair, reasonable, proportionate and consistent. Staff will use a restorative approach that focuses on repairing the harm and damage done through inclusive processes that engage all those concerned. A restorative approach shifts the focus from punishment to learning and from the individual to the community.

5. Bullying

The Little Yarra Steiner School adopts a zero-tolerance policy towards all forms of bullying. All students have the right of respect from others, the right to learn or to be taught, and a right to feel safe and secure in their school environment.

To create a safe and respectful school environment, and prevent bullying and other unacceptable behaviours, the Little Yarra Steiner School will:

• Promote and support safe and respectful learning environments where bullying is not tolerated

• Put in place whole-school processes and strategies to prevent and respond to incidents of bullying and other forms of unacceptable behaviour.

• Involve students, staff and parents in updating this policy

• Take a whole-school approach focusing on safety and wellbeing

The Little Yarra Steiner School aims to:

• Reinforce within the school community what bullying is, and the fact that it is unacceptable

• Ensure everyone within the school community is alert to signs and evidence of bullying and are aware of their responsibility to report bullying to the appropriate authority whether as observer or victim

• Ensure that all reported incidents of bullying are followed up appropriately and that support is given to both victims and perpetrators using a restorative approach to reach closure.

- Ensure that parents and students have access to appropriate support services such as Kids Helpline or Headspace

- Seek parental and peer-group support where appropriate.

These aims will predominantly be delivered to parents in parent meetings, accessible polices on the school website or on paper, presentations or talks by invited guest speakers. New staff will receive induction in this policy followed by ongoing professional development via faculty and College meetings, visiting presenters, workshops offered through ISV, SEA and other bodies, briefings and articles in the staff memo.

Students will experience a whole school educational programme that has at its foundation a moral and ethical basis. Teachers will present paedogogical stories, fairy tales, fables and use other developmentally appropriate methods of sharing expectations of appropriate behaviour in the early years. In later years, this message will be delivered by class teachers and guardians, during lessons and through assemblies and festivals. Teachers will also be supported by visiting presenters who work specifically to develop resilience and socio-emotional health.

The School proactively identifies and considers the needs of vulnerable students who may be more at risk of either engaging in bullying behaviour or being the victim of bullying behaviours. At risk students may include those with special educational needs and/or with a disability, racial and minority groups and those who are potentially the subject of homophobic bullying.

Equal opportunity and anti-discrimination practices are an important part of the school's duty of care to provide a respectful, safe and inclusive school environment which is, free of discrimination, harassment, bullying, vilification, victimisation and otherwise unlawful and unacceptable behaviours.

Definitions:

Bullying occurs when someone, or a group of people, deliberately upset or hurt another person or damage their property, reputation or social acceptance on more than one occasion. There is an imbalance of power in incidents of bullying with the bully or bullies having more power at the time due to age, size, status, and other reasons.

Physical

Persistent pushing, hitting, bumping, kicking, obstructing, confining, practical jokes, stealing, damaging or interfering with personal property.

Verbal

Persistent threats of violence, name-calling, teasing, picking on, mocking, taunting, making put-down comments, belittling, insulting, constant criticism, sexual comments of a demeaning nature, cultural and religious slurs, shouting at and swearing at.

Indirect

Indirect bullying is often harder to recognise and can be carried out behind the bullied person's back. It is designed to harm someone's social reputation and/or cause humiliation. Indirect bullying includes:

- lying and spreading rumours

- playing nasty jokes to embarrass and humiliate

- mimicking

- encouraging others to socially exclude someone

- damaging someone's social reputation or social acceptance.

Cyber bullying

Cyber bullying is direct verbal or indirect bullying behaviours perpetrated using digital technologies. This includes harassment via a mobile phone, setting up a defamatory personal website or deliberately excluding someone from social networking spaces. Cyber bullying can be perpetrated at any time, including outside of school hours or off site.

Cyber-bullying can involve:

- Flaming – online fights using electronic messages with angry or vulgar messages

- Harassment – repeatedly sending nasty, mean and insulting messages

- Denigration – posting or sending gossip or rumours about a person to damage their reputation or friendships

- Outing – sharing someone's secrets or embarrassing information or images online

- Exclusion – intentionally and cruelly excluding someone from an online group

- Cyber-stalking – repeated, intense harassment and denigration that includes threats or creates significant fear

Social/Psychological

Persistent episodes of excluding from activities, ignoring, threatening looks and/or aggressive staring.

Racism, Sexual Harassment and Sexual Orientation

The Little Yarra Steiner School acknowledges that racism, sexual harassment and harassment due to a person's sexual orientation are examples of bullying behaviour that warrant special mention. They may take the form of any of the types of bullying behaviour described above.

What is not bullying

Many distressing behaviours are not examples of bullying even though they are unpleasant and often require teacher intervention and management.

- Mutual conflict involves an argument or disagreement between people but there is not an imbalance of power. Both parties are upset and usually both want a resolution. Unresolved mutual conflict can develop into bullying if one of the parties targets the other repeatedly in retaliation.

- Social rejection or dislike is not bullying unless it involves deliberate and repeated attempts to cause distress, exclude or create dislike by others.

- Single-episode acts of nastiness or physical aggression are not the same as bullying. If someone is verbally abused or pushed on one occasion they are not being bullied. Nastiness or physical aggression that is directed towards many different people is not the same as bullying. However, this does not mean that single episodes of nastiness or physical aggression should be ignored or condoned as these are unacceptable behaviours.

Reporting incidents

When incidents occur that may impact on the safety or wellbeing of any student, it is important for their Class teacher or Class guardian to be informed in the first instance in order for an appropriate response to be able to take place. Any students, parents, staff or other members of the school community are able to report bullying concerns. All concerns will be taken seriously and all complaints will be treated confidentially. The definitions listed above will be used to determine whether the incident constitutes bullying.

Incident reports identified as bullying are collated by the Education Administrator, who will use them to monitor the impact of anti-bullying strategies and positive behaviour programs. Aggregated data will be reviewed annually to enable the Education Administrator to identify emerging patterns over time and inform the ongoing development of school strategies.

If the school's response to a bullying incident is thought to have been inadequate or unsatisfactory, the person reporting the incident will be directed to the school's Grievance Procedure.

If the bullying or harassment incident is minor or a first time occurrence, teachers may elect to use one or more responses from the first or second stage of intervention described in the behaviour management procedures.

If the bullying or harassment continues, or in instances of severe bullying or harassing, a referral will be made to the Education Administrator, who will involve other staff as required, eg. members of Management, the Student Support Co-ordinator, Wellbeing Officer etc. The Education Administrator will oversee the implementation of one or more responses from the second or third stage of intervention described in the behaviour management procedures.

Students who display severe bullying or harassing behaviour or whose behaviour resists school efforts and/or represents a significant threat to the safety and wellbeing of others will result in the application of the third stage of intervention described in the behaviour management procedures.

6. The Little Yarra Steiner School Behaviour Management Procedures

There are three stages of intervention which aim to support learning and social relationships:

The first stage addresses behaviour of relatively minor concern that is disrupting the learning of others, failing to meet the expectations of the teacher or school, or being disrespectful. The teacher works with the student to address the behaviour. This may be for classroom activities or playground incidents.

Appropriate responses in the first stage include making eye contact with the student, redirecting them from their behaviour, relocating them away from the source of their distraction, verbal reminders or therapeutic stories. The School recognises the often unique nature of behavioural issues that arise and each teacher is encouraged to use their professional discretion and understanding of each child and their developmental stage as to the most appropriate form of action for each situation. The student may be required to make restitution by apologising, performing a good deed for others or creating a sorry card. Natural consequences are applied for most infractions, for example, the child that draws on their desk could be asked to spend a lunch time re-sanding it, the child that wastes class time is expected to make up the work in their own time, the child that breaks something or misuses equipment spends some of their own time repairing or replacing those items.

The second stage of intervention involves withdrawal from class. It is activated when the goals of the first stage have not been met. This can be relocation to another class or supervised area of the school. This stage may require engagement with the student's family to support them in making positive changes, and teachers may make contact with the student's parent or carer to discuss their behaviour if they are persistently required to be withdrawn from class activities.

Staff members may withdraw a student from any class or classes of instruction pending the availability of alternate supervision. Students must be supervised to ensure safety and security requirements are met at all times. Decisions about the location, supervision arrangements and the duration of withdrawal must take into account:

• The developmental status of the student; and

• The potential emotional, academic and social impact of such withdrawal on the student.

• The safety of all parties involved or in close proximity e.g. visitors to the school (including parents and children), administration and other contracted employees.

A restorative conversation is strongly recommended following withdrawal to repair relationships and address positive learning goals and social strategies. Staff members may decide to inform parents of their child's withdrawal from school activities depending on the nature of the student's behaviour and frequency of need to withdraw the student. Staff will keep records regarding this process.

The third stage of intervention is suspension from school activities. The school may recommend that families seek external professional support if this is deemed necessary. If there is no change in behaviour after this stage has been reached, the Education Administrator will consider cancellation of enrolment or expulsion as a last resort. Thorough records of both suspensions and expulsions are to be maintained in a register of suspensions and expulsions by the Education Administrator.

6.1 Suspension

Only the Education Administrator has the authority to suspend a student. This authority cannot be delegated.

The Education Administrator may suspend a student from the school if, whilst attending school, travelling to and from school or engaging in any school related activity away from school (including when travelling to or from that activity) 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 damage to or destruction of property

•commits or 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 person based on age; breastfeeding; gender; identity; impairment; industrial activity; lawful sexual activity;

marital status; parent/carer status or status as a carer; physical features; political belief or activity; pregnancy; race; religious belief or activity; sex; sexual orientation; personal association (whether as a relative or otherwise) with a person who is identified by reference to any of the above attributes

•consistently behaves in an unproductive manner that interferes with the wellbeing, safety or educational opportunities of any other student.

First steps: before suspension

Determine if suspension is an option. Suspension is a serious disciplinary measure and is best reserved for incidents when other measures have not produced a satisfactory response.

Conduct a preliminary investigation

The Education Administrator should conduct a thorough investigation to establish the nature of the behaviour, the student who committed the behaviour, the context in which it was committed, and any other relevant circumstances in relation to the incident or behaviour.

Consider options

When determining if suspension is appropriate for a particular student, consideration should be given to:

•the behaviour for which suspension is being considered

•the educational needs of the student

•any disability of the student (disability is defined under the Equal Opportunity Act 2010)

•the age of the student

•the residential and social circumstances of the student, including whether the student is Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander or culturally and linguistically diverse background or is in out of home care

•previous incidences of challenging behaviour and the support/disciplinary measures employed to respond to these.

Before proceeding with a suspension the Education Administrator must ensure the following:

•that the student has had the opportunity to be heard

•that any information or documentation provided by the student or the parent/carer has been taken into account in making the decision regarding the suspension; and

•other forms of action to address the behaviour for which the student is being suspended have been considered.

The Education Administrator should also consider alternative interventions and supports that can be provided to the student to address the reasons for the behaviour before proceeding to suspension.

Next steps: decision, notification and action

In making their decision, the Education Administrator should consider their legal obligations under the Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006. In addition, when determining whether to suspend a student with a disability, the Education Administrator must be sure that reasonable adjustments have been made to assist the student to manage the behaviours where this is a manifestation of disability.

If the behaviour of a student meets the grounds for suspension, the Education Administrator must determine:

•whether the suspension will be undertaken in school or out of school

•the day on which the suspension will commence (including whether it will be an immediate suspension)

•the period of suspension.

Prior to the suspension taking effect, or on the day of taking immediate action, the Education Administrator must:

- Notify the student (verbally) and their parent/carer (via telephone or in person) of the reason/s for the suspension, the school days on which the suspension shall occur where the suspension will occur
- Provide contact details for additional support services to the student and the relevant person as appropriate
- Arrange for appropriate school work to be provided to the student for the period of the suspension
- Provide the student and the relevant person with a Notice of Suspension which must include the reasons for the suspension, the school days on which the suspension shall occur, and copies of the student absence learning plan and return to school plan (if the suspension is longer than three days)

It is important to discuss the reasons for the suspension with the student so that they understand why it is happening and what needs to change. Giving the student the opportunity to have a voice and influence in the discussion helps to foster their engagement in the process. This engagement enables the student to take ownership over and make changes to their behaviour.

Final steps: post-suspension follow up and support

It is important to consider the student's transition back into school and any disruption to their learning. In many cases, the student will require additional educational or other supports to help address the reasons for the incident and/or any underlying behavioural issues.

The Education Administrator should also consider whether it is appropriate to convene a student support group meeting with the student, the parents, and any other adults or professionals involved in the care of the student. The purpose of such a meeting is to discuss the student's behaviour that led to the suspension, and to discuss a range of strategies to address the concerns and prevent further occurrences of such behaviour.

A thorough record of the process undertaken to arrive at the decision to suspend must be recorded in the register of suspensions and expulsions by the Education Administrator.

6.2 Expulsion

Only the Education Administrator has the authority to expel a student from the school. This responsibility cannot be delegated to any other person at the school.

The Education Administrator may expel a student from the school if, whilst attending school, travelling to and from school or engaging in any school related activity away from school (including when travelling to or from that activity) 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 or 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 person based on age; breastfeeding; gender; identity; impairment; industrial activity; lawful sexual activity; marital status; parent/carer status or status as a carer; physical features; political belief or activity; pregnancy; race; religious belief or activity; sex; sexual orientation; personal association (whether as a relative or otherwise) with a person who is identified by reference to any of the above attributes

•consistently behaves in an unproductive manner that interferes with the wellbeing, safety or educational opportunities of any other student.

The student's behaviour must be of such a magnitude that having regard to the need of the student to receive an education; to maintain the health, safety and wellbeing of other students and staff at the school; and to maintain the effectiveness of the school's educational programs, expulsion is considered the only available mechanism.

It is critical that interventions and supports have been implemented to address behaviours of concern prior to making an expulsion decision. Students may only be expelled after a thorough investigation of the incident/s has been conducted.

In determining whether to expel a student the Education Administrator must determine that expulsion of the student is appropriate to:

• The behaviour for which the student is being expelled;

• The educational needs of the student;

• Any disability or additional learning needs of the student;

• The age of the student; and

• The residential and social circumstances of the student.

Prior to an expulsion, the Education Administrator must ensure that:

• A comprehensive range of strategies, consistent with the staged response, to meet the educational, social and emotional needs of the student has been considered and implemented by the school; and

• Despite these strategies, the student's inappropriate behaviour persists.

The student and parents/guardians must be informed that expulsion is being considered and must be given the opportunity to be heard. The Education Administrator may implement an immediate suspension pending expulsion, prior to a meeting with the student and parents/guardians being

convened, only when the Education Administrator considers that the severity of the situation and the possibility of immediate physical threat to another person warrants such action.

If the Education Administrator decides to expel the student, they must provide the student and their parent/carer with the following:

A Notice of Expulsion, which must state-

- The grounds and reasons for the expulsion;
- The date of the commencement of the expulsion; and
- That the student has a right to appeal the expulsion decision.

The Notice of Expulsion and a thorough record of the process undertaken to arrive at the decision to expel must be recorded in the register of suspensions and expulsions by the Education Administrator.

Expulsion appeals

In keeping with principles of procedural fairness and natural justice, a decision to expel can be appealed by the student or their parent/carer. The appeal must be lodged with the Education Administrator within 10 school days of receiving the Notice of Expulsion.

The School Board will determine the appropriate constitution of the Expulsion Review Panel. The person who filed the Expulsion Appeal (the student or their parents/guardians) must be present at the expulsion review panel and have an opportunity to put their case to the panel. The student or their parents/carers may be accompanied at the expulsion review panel meeting by a support person who is not acting for a fee or reward. Legal practitioners are not permitted to attend this meeting on behalf of any member of the expulsion review panel, the student or their parents/carers.

The School Board must nominate a member of the panel to verbally notify the person who has brought the appeal of the outcome of the appeal within 24 hours of the decision being made. This verbal communication must be followed up by written communication notifying the student or their parents/carers of the panel's decision.

If the expulsion appeal panel overturns the Education Administrator's decision to expel the student, the student must be readmitted to school immediately. The Education Administrator must work with the student, their parents/carers and the student's teachers to develop a Return to School Plan for the student.