

**SUSPENSION, TRANSFER AND EXCLUSION  
PROCEDURE**

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**Catholic Education  
Diocese of Parramatta**

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**CATHOLIC EDUCATION, DIOCESE OF PARRAMATTA**  
**SUSPENSION, TRANSFER AND EXCLUSION**  
**PROCEDURE**

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**1. INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE**

- 1.1. CEDP is committed to developing an educational and organisational culture based on mutual trust and respect that assists people to recognise and develop their personal capabilities. This is based on the inherent dignity of the human person as the foundation of all Catholic social teaching and central to the ministry of Catholic education.
- 1.2. Essential to this is the creation and maintenance of a respectful, safe and supportive learning environment that promotes student wellbeing and enables school communities to engage a diverse range of learners in an inclusive manner.
- 1.3. Each school must have a student management and pastoral care framework within which they work.
- 1.4. As part of the student management framework, there will be some instances where a student's behaviour is such that, in the best interests of the student and/or the community, it is appropriate to suspend a student from the school for a temporary period of time; or transfer the student to a different educational setting within the CEDP network of schools.
- 1.5. There may be some very rare instances where it is appropriate and necessary to exclude a student from CEDP schools. Exclusion will only be used once all other options have been exhausted.
- 1.6. The safety and wellbeing of students, parents and staff of CEDP is always paramount.
- 1.7. Decisions regarding suspensions, transfer and exclusion require the acknowledgement and consideration of the health and safety of all members of the school community, as well as their educational, physical and emotional needs.

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**2. SCOPE**

- 2.1. This applies to all Catholic Education Diocese Parramatta schools.

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**3. DEFINITIONS**

- 3.1. **CEDP** refers to Catholic Education Diocese of Parramatta, both schools and office.
  - 3.2. **Exclusion** refers to permanently removing the student from the school and excluding the student from enrolment in any other CEDP school.
  - 3.3. **In school suspension** refers to temporarily removing a student from usual school activities but not removing the student from school.
  - 3.4. **Suspension** refers to temporarily removing a student from the school for a defined period of time.
  - 3.5. **Transfer** means moving the student from one CEDP school to enrol in another CEDP school with the assistance of CEDP.
  - 3.6.
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#### **4. PRINCIPLES OF SUSPENSION**

- 4.1. A Suspension from school is intended to:
- manage risk of harm,
  - establish consequence for a student for misconduct or challenging behaviour,
  - provide an opportunity for planning or further investigation of an incident.
- 4.2. Suspension allows a period of time when the school, parents/carers and the student can work together on the resolution of the problem that has led to the student's suspension.
- 4.3. Suspension is not intended as a punishment. It is one strategy that can be used to manage inappropriate behaviour.
- 4.4. Suspensions must be used in accordance with the CEDP Challenging Behaviour Processes and with the school's student management and pastoral care framework.
- 4.5. Principals can suspend a student for up to five days. Suspensions of six days or more must have the approval of the Director Performance.
- 4.6. Suspensions must be documented and all parties, including parents or carers, must be informed of the start and end date of the suspension.
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#### **5. IN SCHOOL SUSPENSION**

- 5.1. There are a number of circumstances where an in school suspension may be warranted. Principals are to use their discretion based on consideration of student support needs, severity and seriousness of the behaviour and available school resources.
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#### **6. SHORT SUSPENSION**

- 6.1. Principals will generally suspend a student for a period of up to three school days, but may suspend for up to five days under their own authority.
- 6.2.1. A Principal may decide to impose a short suspension for continued disobedience or aggressive behaviour.
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#### **7. LONG SUSPENSION (4-10 DAYS)**

- 7.1. A Principal may decide to impose a long suspension if a short suspension has not resolved the behaviour issue or if the misbehaviour is a serious incident to warrant a longer period where the student is removed from the school environment.
- 7.2. Reasons for a long suspension would include:
- repeated misconduct,
  - physical violence which has resulted in injury or which has seriously interfered with the safety or wellbeing of other students or staff,
  - use or possession of a prohibited weapon, firearm or knife. *(Please note, if a student has brought a weapon of any kind onto the school site or to a school event, the CEDP Weapons Procedure must be followed),*
  - possession, supply or use of a suspected illegal substance,
  - serious criminal behaviour related to the school.
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## **8 BEFORE IMPLEMENTING A SUSPENSION**

- 8.1. Before suspending a student Principals must ensure:
- all behaviour incidents have been documented,
  - appropriate personalised learning and behaviour plans and support strategies have been implemented and documented,
  - appropriate school based support and student services personnel have been involved,
  - they have discussed the specific behaviour which the school considers unacceptable and which may lead to suspension with the student and their parents/carers.
- 8.2. There may be circumstances where an immediate suspension is warranted due to the severity and seriousness of the behaviour. Principals are to use their discretion in relation to student behaviour that warrants an immediate short suspension.
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## **9 SHORT SUSPENSION PROCESS**

- 9.1. An interview is held with the student prior to making the decision to impose a short suspension. Principals must ensure that the student is given information about the behaviour of concern or the nature of allegation(s).
- 9.2. Following investigation of the incident, the Principal informs the student of the decision to impose a short suspension, including the start and end date of the suspension and the reason for the suspension.
- 9.3. Parents/carers are verbally notified of the decision to impose a short suspension, including the start and end date of the suspension.
- 9.4. Parents/carers and the student receive written notification of the decision to impose a short suspension, the reason for the suspension, the start and end date of the suspension and the time and date of the student's re-entry interview upon the end of the suspension period.
- 9.5. The student is to be provided with school work during the suspension from school.
- 9.6. The Principal ensures that the school retains records of the investigation of the incident, the notification of the suspension, the re-entry interview and the agreed management framework/plan.
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## **10 LONG SUSPENSION PROCESS**

- 10.1. When imposing a long suspension, Principals must follow the steps outlined above.
- 10.2. Additionally, Principals must ensure that a short suspension has been imposed on the student in the past and this has not resolved the behaviour (for cases of repeated misconduct).
- 10.3. The student has had the opportunity and appropriate support to follow the behaviour management plan agreed to at the short suspension.
- 10.4. Principals must gain the approval of the Director Performance for long suspensions of six days or more and then forward a copy of the suspension letter to both the Director Performance and Head Student Services.
- 10.5. There may be exceptional circumstances where a long suspension is warranted even if a short suspension has not been previously imposed. These circumstances include physical violence, use or possession of a weapon or possession, supply or use of a suspected illegal substance(s).
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## **11 RE-ENTRY FOLLOWING A SUSPENSION**

- 11.1. Upon the end of the suspension period, the Principal or delegate conducts an interview with the student with their parent/carer(s) present.
- 11.2. Where a parent/carer is not available within a reasonable period of time the Principal may make the decision to meet with the student separately.
- 11.3. A Principal or their delegate will develop a management plan prior to convening the re- entry interview. The student and their parents/carers will be asked to agree to this management plan before the student's re-entry into school.
- 11.4. Records of the re-entry and management plan must be maintained by the schools.

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## **12 PASTORAL ABSENCE OF STUDENTS**

- 12.1. By the mutual consent of the Principal and a student's parents/caregivers, a student may be absent for short-term absences of a pastoral nature.
- 12.2. Students asked to remain at home for pastoral reasons should be recorded on the roll as absent on 'approved leave,' and the reason for the absence noted.
- 12.3. For Duty of Care purposes, schools need to be able to demonstrate that parents are aware of this arrangement, as it will generally be included in a Behaviour Management Plan. Students asked to remain at home for disciplinary reasons should be treated as formal suspensions and documented according to the procedures in this policy.

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## **13 PRINCIPLES OF TRANSFER**

- 13.1. A transfer may be considered by the Principal in consultation with the Head Student Services and Manager Wellbeing.
- 13.2. The Director Performance will approve a transfer of a student.
- 13.3. The transfer should give the student the best possible chance of success at an alternative school.
- 13.4. The student and his/her family will be consulted on appropriate alternative school settings wherever possible.
- 13.5. A student and his/her family who rejects the offer of an alternate school placement may forfeit the right to a place in any school in CEDP.

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## **14 REASON FOR A TRANSFER**

- 14.1. The transfer of a student will only be considered where:
    - current school strategies and interventions have been exhausted,
    - there is insufficient progress and continued enrolment at the school is not in the best interests of the student,
    - the continued enrolment compromises the school's ability to provide a safe and supportive learning environment.
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## **15 RECOMMENDING A TRANSFER**

- 15.1. When recommending a transfer for a student, the Principal must ensure:
- the issues have been discussed with both the student and their parents/carers,
  - alternative options have been explored,
  - a behaviour management plan has been put in place for the student and the student has been given the appropriate support and opportunities to comply with the plan,
  - the behaviour management team has been consulted and they have given support to the student,
  - the Head Student Services has been consulted.

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## **16 TRANSFER PROCESS**

- 16.1. Before a transfer is imposed, the Head Student Services or delegate and the Principal will work collaboratively with the student and their parents/carers to find an alternative education setting for the student.
- 16.2. The parents/carers will be notified in writing that a transfer is being considered for their child.
- 16.3. In recommending an alternative education setting within CEDP, the Head Student Services will consider other schools or educational settings in CEDP that might better meet the student's specific needs.
- 16.4. The Principal and the Head Student Services will work collaboratively with the receiving Principal to share information and assist the transition process. The receiving Principal will consult with the Head Student Services on resolving any issues foreseen in relation to the transfer of a student.
- 16.5. The Director Learning will approve the transfer and this option will be presented to the student and their parents/carers in writing. The final decision to transfer the student will be documented.
- 16.6. If a student or their parents/carers reject the offer of the transfer, the student may forfeit the right to a place in any school in CEDP.
- 16.7. A review process considering the circumstances leading to the student's transfer and the processes undertaken by the school will be conducted after the transfer in conjunction with the Student Services team.

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## **17 TRANSFER PROCESS**

- 17.1. In serious circumstances of misbehaviour the Principal may exclude a student of any age from their school. Such circumstances include, but are not limited to the following:
- in extreme circumstances where the student's behaviour represents a significant risk of harm to other students, teachers or the school community,
  - if a student has significant attendance issues and efforts to re-engage the student have been unsuccessful,
  - if there is a significant breach in the enrolment contract between the school and the parents/carers. This could include an inability to resolve a significant dispute between the parents/carers and the school; where the school cannot fulfil their duty of care requirements. A student will be given all possible school based and system support before an exclusion is imposed.

- 17.2. Due to the gravity of the circumstances that exist when consideration is being given to an exclusion, particular emphasis will be given to providing an opportunity for the student and parents/carers to respond to the proposed action.
  - 17.3. Only the Executive Director can approve exclusion of a student.
  - 17.4. Students that have been excluded from a particular school for misbehaviour may not re- enrol in that school without the approval of the Executive Director.
  - 17.5. An exclusion can be reviewed at the discretion of the Executive Director.
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## **18 RECOMMENDING AN EXCLUSION**

- 18.1. When considering a recommendation of exclusion, the Principal must consult and involve the Head Student Services and the Director Performance.
  - 18.2. The Principal must:
    - notify the parents/carers in writing that exclusion from CEDP is being considered, giving reasons for the possible course of action, and including sufficient documentation for a clear understanding of the issues,
    - provide an opportunity for parents/carers to meet with the Principal and Head Student Services or delegate to discuss the issue/s and respond. Generally, up to five working days should be allowed for parents to attend this meeting, or to respond in writing, to the proposed exclusion,
    - consider the responses of the parents/carers and the student (where applicable) as part of the decision making process,
    - provide an opportunity for a further meeting between parties, if requested
    - ensure the CEDP Procedural Fairness Guidelines are followed,
    - notify the parish priest to provide an opportunity for his pastoral contribution to the discernment process.
  - 18.3. The Principal must formally recommend an exclusion to the Head Student Services and Director Performance.
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## **19 EXCLUSION PROCESS**

- 19.1. After receiving formal notification of a recommendation for exclusion, the Director Performance or their delegate will give regard to the reasons for this possible course of action, any previous action taken, and the substance of any response from the parents/carers and student.
  - 19.2. If agreeing with the recommendation, advise the Executive Director in writing of the recommendation to exclude.
  - 19.3. The Executive Director will approve an exclusion be imposed after receiving formal notification of approval of the exclusion, the Principal and the Director Performance will advise parents/carers in writing of the decision to exclude which will include the reasons for this possible course of action, any previous action taken, and the substance of any response from the parents/carers and student.
  - 19.4. The formal notification will also include the appropriate procedures for submitting a formal review of the decision give assistance to the students and their parents/carers to find a placement in an alternative educational setting.
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## **20 REVIEW OF THE DECISION TO SUSPEND, TRANSFER OR EXCLUDE**

- 20.1. Decisions about suspension, transfer or exclusion may be reviewed if parents/carers consider that correct procedure has not been followed, or that an unreasonable decision has been reached.
- 20.2. A request for review is made in writing and is to state the grounds on which the review is being based.
- 20.3. Parents/carers should be notified in the official documentation of the sanction being applied and of their right to request a review of the particular decision.
- 20.4. Any request for review should be submitted to the Principal within ten days of receipt of formal communication of a decision from the school.
- 20.5. The Executive Director or Director Performance will review any decisions to suspend, transfer or exclude a student.
- 20.6. In assessing a review, the Director Performance or Executive Director may request independent advice and assistance from internal or external agents not directly associated with the matter under review.
- 20.7. Every effort will be made to deal with reviews promptly, so as to ensure that periods of absence from school are not unnecessarily prolonged.
- 20.8. The outcome of the review will be advised in writing to the parties, including the specific reasons for reaching the decision.

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## **21 RELATED DOCUMENTS**

- 21.1. Anti-bullying Procedures
- 21.2. Child protection Procedures
- 21.3. Weapons Procedures

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## **22 RELEVANT LEGISLATION**

- 22.1. Education Act 1990
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