



P: +61 3 5629 2500
E: office@stac.vic.edu.au
W: www.stac.vic.edu.au

ST THOMAS AQUINAS
COLLEGE

PO Box 500
1 Tynong Road,
Tynong, Victoria 3813

PP401 STUDENT ENGAGEMENT POLICY AND PROCEDURE

"And you, fathers, provoke not your children to anger; but bring them up in the discipline and correction of the Lord." Ephesians 6:4

PREAMBLE

Source of Obligation:

The Catholic Church requires that Catholic schools ensure that their discipline procedures be in accordance with the virtues of justice, prudence and temperance avoiding the excesses provoked by anger and negligence: Pope Pius XI provides the following guidance to all Catholic educators: *"The Apostle of the Gentiles did not hesitate to descend to such details of practical instruction in his epistles, especially in the Epistle to the Ephesians, where among other things he gives this advice: "And you, fathers, provoke not your children to anger." [46] This fault is the result not so much of excessive severity, as of impatience and of ignorance of means best calculated to effect a desired correction; it is also due to the all too common relaxation of parental discipline which fails to check the growth of evil passions in the hearts of the younger generation. Parents therefore, and all who take their place in the work of education, should be careful to make right use of the authority given them by God, whose vicars in a true sense they are. This authority is not given for their own advantage, but for the proper up-bringing of their children in a holy and filial "fear of God, the beginning of wisdom," on which foundation alone all respect for authority can rest securely; and without which, order, tranquillity and prosperity, whether in the family or in society, will be impossible."* Pope Pius XI, Divini Magistri, December 31, 1929

The Victorian Registration Standards (s 4.3.1(6)) require that our policies relating to the discipline of students must be based on principles of procedural fairness and must not permit corporal punishment. All policies also take into account the Ministerial Order No. 870 – Child Safe Standards – Managing the risk of child abuse in schools.

Preamble

The St Thomas Aquinas College community of students, parents and staff is committed to providing a Traditional Catholic formation in an orderly, safe, caring and stimulating environment that allows all students to reach their potential.

We believe that this is achieved through:

- Adherence to our Vision and Mission: ie the provision of a complete education taking in the whole of human life: spiritual and physical; intellectual & moral; individual, domestic and social; in accordance with the example and teachings of Christ.
- The promotion of respect for God, self and others, for property and for the environment is part of what we will do as a College;
- The development of courteous, considerate and co-operative ways of behaving; and
- Taking responsibility for personal actions.

Expectations of behaviour are to be clearly communicated to all members of the College community. Our aim is to motivate each member to accept responsibility for their own behaviour and make decisions based on consideration and respect for others.

Effective management of student behaviour occurs in partnership between the College and the families of the students. Behaviour management within our College stems from our care and concern for each member's wellbeing in body, mind and soul. We disapprove of the inappropriate behaviours, but not of the individual; in Catholic terms, we love the sinner but hate the sin. Staff communicate and negotiate

with others in order to build support and develop ownership and shared acceptance for ideas, actions and decisions. Students are led to recognise that choices regarding their behaviour can be sinful or virtuous and can have either positive or negative consequences. Consequences for inappropriate behaviour are to be fairly administered and follow due process.

PURPOSE

Through an emphasis on positive attitudes, behaviour and relationships, St Thomas Aquinas College aims to promote the growth and development of each student as an individual within the community:

- to provide a positive, safe learning environment in which an individual's needs, rights and social responsibilities are met and reflected, and students feel safe, valued and cared for;
- to support children in the making of responsible choices, so that they are enabled to manage themselves and their behaviours, that they may anticipate, experience and accept the consequences for both appropriate and inappropriate choices regarding their words and actions.

SCOPE

This policy applies to all staff, students and parents of St Thomas Aquinas College.

POLICY STATEMENTS

Expected Outcomes

The expected outcomes of this policy are:

- the contribution to a whole College climate of respect for mutual rights and responsibilities, with an emphasis on virtuous living, and the value, uniqueness and dignity of every person made in the image and likeness of God, rather than on punishment or reward;
- the participation of all staff members in the creation of a safe, secure, student-oriented learning environment where students learn to master themselves by developing age-appropriate control of their own behaviour and with it the corresponding virtues;
- for students to examine their own behaviour in discussion with staff in a way which reflects their involvement in the decision making process;
- the special needs of students are identified and are supported through appropriate programmes. Teachers examine motivation and respond appropriately to unacceptable behaviour;
- teachers understand and demonstrate how to conduct effective behavioural change and understand student behaviour management models and practice and form their students in the acquisition of Christian virtues.

Prohibition of Corporal Punishment

It is our policy that corporal punishment is not permitted.

The use of any corporal punishment by a staff member is strictly prohibited. Any staff member who breaches this rule will be subject to disciplinary proceedings which may include dismissal.

GUIDELINES

Guidelines

St Thomas Aquinas College seeks to develop a culture of positive discipline by setting clear expectations of students and encouraging positive behaviour. Strategies for developing this culture include:

- teachers and students are to communicate respectfully and in a manner which reflects our Christian ideals;
- students strive to solve conflicts independently and respectfully. They will refer to a member of staff if needed;
- students are to be considerate of others and their safety when playing;
- students use own, others' and College equipment responsibly;
- students move in a manner which is orderly, appropriate to the area and ensures the safety of themselves and others;
- students are responsible for and respectful of our natural and College environments;
- students need to follow the behavioural expectations of the classroom;
- students are only allowed in the classroom with the teacher's permission;
- students are to take responsibility for their physical and verbal actions and reactions, learn to identify what is right and wrong in their actions and learn to apologise when another has been adversely affected.

Procedural Fairness

Students have a right to procedural fairness in dealings that involve their interests. This includes disciplinary decisions.

The principles of procedural fairness include the right to:

- know what the rules are, and what behaviour is expected of students;
- have decisions determined by a reasonable and unbiased person;
- know the allegations that have been made, and to respond to them;
- be heard before a decision is made; and
- to have a decision reviewed (but not so as to delay an immediate punishment).

St Thomas Aquinas College is committed to ensuring procedural fairness when disciplining a student.

COLLEGE RULES AND EXPECTED STANDARD OF BEHAVIOUR

College Rules and the Expected Standard of Behaviour

The following simple rules will apply to all interactions within the College:

1. We must all attend regularly, be on time for classes and be properly prepared for work.
2. We must allow learning to take place and must follow instructions.
3. We must show consideration for others through words and actions based on respect so as to cause no harm or offence.
4. We must move and act in a way that isn't disruptive or unsafe for others and ourselves.
5. We must always act in ways that look after our own property and that of the College community.
6. We must act in a way that reflects well on ourselves, our families and our College, on God and on His Church.
7. We must dress in a way that reflects Christian standards and honours our College.

College Policy documents will be available to staff, parents and students on the College's Extranet program (TASSWeb). Policies which are particularly relevant to Student Engagement include:

- Student, Staff and Parent Code of Conduct
- The Discipline Handbooks (Primary and Secondary)
- Student Promotion
- Equal Opportunity
- Bullying Harassment and Cyber Bullying Policy and Procedure
- Use of Internet and Electronic Equipment Policy and Procedure
- Student Attendance Policy and Procedure
- Uniform Policy
- Child Safety Policy
- Child Safety Code of Conduct

The STAC Code of Conduct and Consequences for Breaching College Rules articulates how the College enshrines our Rules into a Code of Conduct and how breaches of this Code of Conduct/Rules system will generally be treated.

OTHER GUIDELINES

Implementation

Students are adequately educated about the behavioural expectations of St Thomas Aquinas College in both a classroom setting and the yard.

Teachers engage in preventative action to prevent or minimize unnecessary disruption. They:

- establish positive relationships with students, parents and other staff members;
- know the expectations of College behaviour;
- should be consistent in enforcing College rules;
- have an aesthetically pleasing and functional room;
- prepare and utilize appropriate materials;
- arrive at class on time;
- plan interesting lessons (as much as possible);
- cater and plan for mixed abilities;
- plan appropriate seating arrangements;
- plan for the language of discipline;
- make the routines clear.

Guidelines for applying Rewards and Consequences:

- rewards and consequences must be applied fairly and consistently;
- teachers are encouraged to use positive reinforcement and rewards to encourage desirable behaviour;
- rewards and consequences should be in proportion to the behaviour and the application of consequences from the least intrusive to the most intrusive;
- consequences should not be applied to whole groups of students unless deemed necessary;
- suggested rewards and consequences will be discussed between staff and students throughout the year;
- ensure that the student involved has sufficient time to eat and use the toilet if necessary;
- corporal punishment, belittling, humiliation and any form of abuse (physical, verbal or emotional) is expressly forbidden.

A decision to negotiate a transfer a student may only be made by the Deputy Principal or Principal.

HOW STAC RESPOND TO UNACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOUR

First Instance Response (Level One)

First instances of unacceptable behaviour are managed by teaching staff. Specialist Teachers and teachers on Yard Duty will notify the Head of sub-School of any interventions. The teacher will:

- remind students of rules or identify inappropriate behaviour;
- make consequences clear;
- give simple choices and consequences.
- Repeat level 1 infractions become more serious and escalate to the next level.

Sample First Instance (Level One) Responses are articulated in the relevant Discipline Handbooks (Primary and Secondary).

Response To Continued Unacceptable Behaviour (Level Two)

Should unacceptable behaviour continue, teachers are to apply natural and proportionate consequences. These strategies are to be applied with consideration of the context of the incident and individual student needs. At all times respect for the students and the desire to maintain positive relationships should be evident. Possible consequences include:

- relocation (closer to teacher, to another play area, shade area, another desk or classroom);
- meetings with the Principal, Deputy Principal or Head of sub-School, where behavioural expectations are agreed verbally;
- removal of privileges (play time, specialist lessons);
- written behaviour reflection or letter of apology;
- contacting parents;
- in-School Detention during recess or lunchtimes (supervised by the teacher). Detentions should not involve the entire recess or lunch period and work completed during detention is to be related to the problem or incident.
- out of school detentions 30 minutes - 2 hours after consultation with parents.

Sample Second Instance (Level Two) Responses are articulated in the relevant Discipline Handbooks (Primary and Secondary).

Response To Serious Incidents or Ongoing Unacceptable Behaviour (Level Three)

Listed below are some of the procedures which it is expected will be used on an ongoing basis. Serious Incidents are to be referred to the Deputy Principal or, in their absence, the Principal in the first instance. Serious incidents include:

- degrading or humiliating another student or teacher;
- possession of illicit substance/weapon;
- property damage;
- verbal abuse directed towards another student and/or staff member;
- physical altercation with other student(s) and/or staff;
- consistently behaving in a manner which interferes with student learning
- endangering other student(s) or staff member;
- theft of property;
- cyber bullying;
- serious breach of ICT User Agreement;
- any other incident deemed by the Principal (or delegate) to be of a serious nature

HOW STAC RESPOND TO UNACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOUR

Response To Serious Incidents or Ongoing Unacceptable Behaviour (Level Three) – Cont...

These incidents are to be managed by the College if they occur while travelling to or from the College, on in the College grounds or while on organised College activities, such as excursions or camps.

Serious incidents or ongoing unacceptable behaviour are to be reported by the staff member who witnessed the behaviour. This information is reported to the Deputy Principal (or Principal) via the College Incident Report Form located on the Staff intranet under staff forms. Whenever possible, the staff member who is first aware of the incident will notify the Deputy Principal or Principal immediately.

When concerns arise about a student's behaviour, when a student is displaying chronic patterns of unacceptable behaviour, or a Serious Incident has occurred, a more targeted response will be required which may include both supportive measures and disciplinary measures. Staff involved in this process may include: The Principal, Deputy Principal, relevant Head of sub-School and relevant reporting teacher.

Successful interventions are underpinned by strong staff-student relationships, as they require an understanding of the underlying factors influencing behaviour and the immediate triggers for its occurrence.

Where students repeatedly demonstrate challenging behaviour, the College will implement a more structured intervention strategy as part of a staged response to address the behaviour. Intervention strategies that should be implemented include:

- A Behaviour Incident Report is to be completed by the staff member who responded to the incident, and submitted to the relevant Head of sub-School;
- Parents/guardians will be contacted;
- an assessment of the behaviour will be made, focusing on its influence, triggers and motivation;
- a Behaviour Support Plan and/or Individual Education Plan may be developed. This may include weekly conduct report card, environmental changes to the learning environment or explicit strategies to reform bad behaviours;
- appropriate support services may be engaged, such as counselling, assessments or welfare agencies.

In the event of continuing persistent and serious misconduct, the above procedure is followed by a period of in school suspension, suspension or expulsion.

Sample Serious Instance (Level Three) Responses are articulated in the relevant Discipline Handbook (Primary or Secondary).

RESPONSE STRATEGIES EXPLAINED

Procedures for Detention, Community Service, Suspension and Expulsion.

St Thomas Aquinas College has developed specific procedures that must be followed when considering detention, the suspension or expulsion of a student. Refer to DOC40103 Further Information on Discipline Outcomes.

Individual Behaviour Management Plan

Individual Behaviour Management Plans or Student Behaviour Contracts may be made in certain circumstances.

Behaviour Management Plans and Student Behaviour Contracts will be negotiated between College staff, students and parents/guardians, and will consider the student's:

- age;
 - developmental needs; and
 - behavioural context.
- Vices to overcome and virtues to acquire in line the College's Virtues Program

Desired behaviour/goals of the student will be clearly described. Discussion about the vice they need to overcome and the virtue they need to acquire will be managed by the Dean. The plan will outline changes required to the learning environment to support the student to modify their behaviour.

The College will refer the student to other support available and review, assess, change and modify the plan as needed.

Parent Contact

Teachers are encouraged to maintain regular and positive communication with parents throughout the year. Parents may be contacted in the event that teachers become concerned with a student's behaviour. Records of student's inappropriate behaviour are to be kept and senior administration informed of such communication.

Parents will be formally contacted in the following circumstances:

- serious or persisting breaches of the behaviour management guidelines;
- in the event that an injury to themselves or others has occurred as a result of their actions.

IMPLEMENTATION

This policy is implemented by:

- staff training and professional development opportunities in behaviour management;
- communicating this policy to the College community;
- monitoring the effectiveness of the policy; and
- reviewing and evaluating the policy annually.

These policies and procedures are communicated to staff, students, guardians, parents and the College community through:

- the College website;
- the Staff Handbook/Intranet;
- the Student Planner; and
- relevant articles in the College newsletter.

RESPONSIBILITIES

The Principal must:

- Implement this policy and procedure
- Monitor the implementation of this policy and procedure

Teachers must:

- abide by this policy and procedure at all times

Students must:

- be treated in accordance with this Policy at all times
- abide by this policy and procedure at all times

Parents must:

- be aware of the Code of Conduct and consequences of breaching the Code of Conduct
- abide by this policy and procedure at all times

Welfare Officers must:

- Provide assistance in the implementation and conduct of this policy and procedure

REVIEW

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