

## RATIONALE

Barton Primary School has a clearly developed set of school rules, expectations and stepped process for managing challenging behaviours.

Suspension is the process of excluding a student from the standard instruction or educational opportunities being provided to other students at the school for part of a day, a full day, or multiple days. Suspension is a serious disciplinary measure and is best reserved for incidents when other measures have not produced a satisfactory response or when the transgression is at an extreme level.

## AIMS

- To ensure the health, safety and wellbeing of all Barton Primary School staff and students
- To have a consistent, transparent process for managing challenging behaviours
- To ensure that there is no threat to the learning opportunities of all students

## IMPLEMENTATION

- Only Principals have authority to make the final decision to suspend a student. This authority cannot be delegated.
- School staff may provide advice to inform the principal's decision whether to suspend a student and may assist in the management of the student's behaviour and/or in communications with the parents, carers or relevant persons. Principals hold ultimate responsibility for ensuring that all processes are followed correctly.
- In order for suspension to be an option, the following conditions must be in place:
  - The student's behaviour must have occurred:
    - Whilst attending school;
    - Or travelling to or from school;
    - Or while engaged in any school activity away from the school;
    - Or travelling to and from any school activity.
  - The student's behaviour must meet one or more of the following conditions:
    1. Behaves in such a way as to pose a danger, whether actual, perceived or threatened, to the health, safety or wellbeing of any person;
    2. Causes significant damage to or destruction of property;
    3. Commits or attempts to commit or is knowingly involved in the theft of property;
    4. Possesses, uses or sells or deliberately assists another person to possess, use or sell illicit substances or weapons;
    5. 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;
    6. 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 states 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;

7. Consistently behaves in an unproductive manner that interferes with the wellbeing, safety or educational opportunities of any other student.
- For incidents between students that occur outside of school hours or in locations other than those listed above, a suspension cannot be used as a response. The impact of cyberbullying (and other behaviours) outside of school hours/off school premises on schools is acknowledged, however, if the behaviour occurs solely outside of school hours/grounds suspension is not an available recourse. If incidents outside of school hours are connected to behaviour that does meet the grounds and location requirements for suspension, this external behaviour may be considered when determined the response to an in-school incident. For more information see see Bully Stoppers: Schools and Cybersafety and Step-by-step Guides
  - A thorough investigation will be conducted to establish the nature of the behaviour/s, the student who committed those behaviour/s, the context in which it was committed, and any other relevant circumstances in relation to the incident or behaviour
  - 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
    - 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 implementing a suspension the principal 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 relevant person 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
  - Suspension may include:
    - In-school suspension
    - An immediate suspension
  - The period of time for a suspension will be applied for the shortest time necessary
  - The suspension will not exceed five days
  - Barton Primary School will ensure that in alignment with Ministerial Order 625, that the student will have a 'relevant person' to participate in the process to support and advocate for them. In situations where the parent/carer is unavailable or unwilling to act as the 'relevant person' for their child, they can nominate an alternative relevant person

- When considering a suspension for an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander student, the principal may engage with the Koorie Engagement Support Officer (KESO)
- Prior to the suspension taking effect, or on the day of taking immediate action, the principal must complete all of the following:
  - Identify the 'relevant person'
  - Notify the student (verbally) and the relevant person (via telephone or in person) of the following information: the reason/s for suspension, the school days on which the suspension shall occur and 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:
    - Where the student is suspended for three days or less, provide meaningful work
    - Where the student is suspended for more than three days, develop a Student Absence Learning Plan and Return to School Plan
  - Provide the student and relevant person with the following documentation
    - Notice of Suspension
    - Parent brochure
    - Student Absence Learning Plan (if applicable)
    - Return to School Plan (if applicable)
  - Record the suspension of CASES21
- After the suspension has been completed, provide an opportunity (where appropriate) for a post suspension Student Support Group (SSG) meeting.

## APPROVED

Ratified by School Council 21<sup>st</sup> June 2018

## EVALUATION

This policy will be reviewed every three years as part of the school's three year review cycle.

## RELATED DOCUMENTS

- <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/teachers/studentmanagement/Pages/suspensionconsiderations.aspx>
- <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/teachers/studentmanagement/Pages/inschoolsuspension.aspx>

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