

Related Policies

Discipline
Exclusion
Legal Responsibilities and Authority
Managing Student Behaviour
Restraint of Students

Purpose

This policy sets out the processes that are undertaken when determining that a student is to be suspended from school for disciplinary or other reasons.

Policy

Schools will develop policies and procedures for suspension, transfer or exclusion that reflect Gospel values and respects the dignity of students.

Suspension of a student is a school matter and is only used when the Principal determines that suspension is required to prevent serious harm.

Students under the statutory leaving age are legally required to attend school.

Procedures outlined are followed for all students whether under or over the statutory school leaving age.

Definitions

Suspension

A student is required to leave a school for a specified period of time and that the student's return is subject to specified conditions.

Statutory leaving age ACT

A child who has completed Year 12 or has reached 17 years of age has attained the school leaving age.

Statutory leaving age NSW

A child who has reached 17 years of age or has completed year 10 and is above 15 years of age and engaged in paid work or a combination of approved education or training and paid work has attained school leaving age.

Procedures

Legislative differences between ACT and NSW mean that different practices are adopted.

1. Length of Suspension

In ACT, suspension is limited to twenty (20) days. No limit is specified in NSW. Archdiocesan Principals are authorised to suspend students for up to five (5) consecutive days. Any consideration of suspension longer than five (5) days must be authorised by the Director.

2. Reasons for Suspension

The Principal may suspend a student when satisfied that such action is warranted, if a student:

- demonstrates consistent and wilful non-compliance
- acts violently or threatens violence
- threatens good order
- disrupts his/her learning or that of other children.

NSW Principals should be guided by the ACT list.

3. Counselling

In the ACT, a suspended student is given a reasonable opportunity for counselling after seven (7) school days suspension (not necessarily consecutive) in a single term. Counselling can be offered before this time at the discretion of the Principal.

In NSW no legal requirement is in place. Principals should consider the option of counselling as part of a management program aimed at supporting students.

4. Procedural fairness

In the ACT, no explicit mention is made of procedural fairness. The NSW treatment of procedural fairness is followed in all situations. Procedural fairness involves:

- provision of relevant policies and procedures to involved parties
- provision to these parties of the details of any allegations
- provision to these parties of the right to respond to allegations and, if appropriate, to appeal any decision
- the right to an impartial decision.

5. Action by the Principal in Circumstances Requiring Suspension

- Give the student a fair hearing and discuss the implications and consequences of the behaviour with the student before a decision is reached as to the course of action to be followed.
- Notify and discuss the issue with parents or guardians. Depending on the seriousness of the situation, this may need to occur after the decision to suspend a student has been taken.
- Having been informed of their suspension, students under statutory leaving age do not leave the school until the end of the school day unless parents have arranged supervisory responsibilities that ensure the safety of the student. The suspension period begins on the following day.
- Parents or guardians of the suspended student must be made aware, orally and in writing, that the school no longer has a responsibility for a suspended student until the student returns to school. Written communication with the parents is posted to the parent's home address.
- If appropriate, the Parish Priest or Chaplain is informed of the suspension.
- When a student returns to the school following a period of suspension, the school provides appropriate support and developmental programs which will enable the student to re-establish his or her reputation in a positive way and resume normal activities as a full member of the school community. In keeping with Catholic ethos, all subsequent dealings with a student illustrate the school's commitment to reconciliation.

- Before resuming normal classes, the student is interviewed by the Principal or delegate and the developmental program of support outlined. In most instances it is appropriate for the parents to be involved in this interview.
- The period of suspension is normally not to exceed five (5) consecutive school days.

If a Principal suspends a student, immediate notification of this suspension is made to the Head of Human Resource Services at the Catholic Education Office.

References

Education Act 2004 (ACT)
NSW Board of Studies. Registration Systems and Member Non-government Schools (NSW) Manual, section 5.7.

Forms

Student Suspension Notification Record Sheet.

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