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Coogee Boys' Preparatory School

Suspension, Expulsion of School Students & Exclusionary Action Policy and Procedures

Context

All students and staff have the right to be treated fairly and with dignity in an environment free from disruption, intimidation, harassment, discrimination, inappropriate or illegal behaviours. To achieve this, the school will endeavour to maintain high standards of student behaviour.

There will be cases of unacceptable behaviour where it will be in the best interests of the school community and/or the student involved, for the student to be removed from the school for a period or completely.

School staff, students and parents should be fully aware of the suspension and expulsion procedures and their place in the context of that school's student welfare and discipline policies.

In implementing these procedures, the Principal must ensure that no student is discriminated against. The Principal must also ensure that the implementation of these procedures takes into account factors such as the age, individual needs, any disability and developmental level of students and must ensure that records are made and retained of any action taken in relation to the implementation of these procedures.

Policy Statement

Suspension is where students are removed from the class setting for a designated period of time. In school suspensions place students in another supervised location within the school, while out of school suspensions (short and long) remove students from school grounds for a specified duration of time.

Suspension is not intended as a punishment. It is only one strategy for managing inappropriate behaviour within a school's student welfare and discipline policies. We believe that it is most effective when parents are responsible in taking an active role, in partnership with the school, to modify the inappropriate behaviour of their child. The school will endeavour to work with parents with a view to assisting a suspended student to re-join the school community within a reasonable and appropriate timeframe which will ultimately be determined by the school.

For most students, suspension allows time for the student to reflect on their behaviour, to acknowledge and accept responsibility for the behaviours which led to the suspension, and to accept responsibility for changing their behaviour to meet the school's expectations in the future. It also allows parents time to reflect on their role and responsibility in ensuring that their child is fully supported, prepared and ready to return to school.

The Principal and Head of School has authority, consistent with the provisions of these procedures and associated documents, to suspend or expel a student from their own school. They will exercise this authority having regard to their responsibilities to the whole school community and to the principles of procedural fairness.

The principles of procedural fairness are fundamental to the implementation of these procedures. Procedural fairness is generally recognised as having two essential elements. These are:

- the right to be heard, and

- the right of a person to a fair and impartial decision.

They can also apply outside of school hours and off school premises where there is a clear and close connection between the school and the conduct of students. This includes the use by a student of social networking sites, mobile phones and/or other technology to threaten, impersonate, bully, or harass another student or a staff member.

At Coogee Prep under no circumstances will corporal punishment, or any form of physical violence be used as discipline by a staff member, visitor, itinerant tutor, external provider, parent or volunteer. The School has a policy that does not explicitly or implicitly sanction the administering of corporal punishment by non-school persons, including parents, to enforce discipline at the school.

General Principles

In determining whether a student's misbehaviour is serious enough to warrant suspension, the Head of School will consider the safety, care and welfare of the student, staff and all community members.

- Ensure that appropriate school student welfare strategies and discipline options have been applied and documented.
- Ensure that appropriate support personnel available within the school system and externally have been involved.
- Ensure that discussion has occurred with the student and parents regarding specific misbehaviour which the school considers unacceptable and which may lead to suspension.
- Develop, in conjunction with the school learning support team or appropriate external support (the AIS), a specific behaviour management plan to assist the student to manage inappropriate behaviour.
- Provide a formal written caution detailing inappropriate behaviours, as well as clear expectations of what is required of the student in future, and
- Record all action taken on the SENTRAL database by the Head of School.

In some circumstances the Head of School may determine that a student should be suspended immediately or be expelled from the School. This will usually be due, but not limited, to reasons such as the safety of students or staff.

The Head of School will immediately contact the parents of the student(s) concerned and if deemed necessary will contact the police liaison office and/or school safety and response hotline 1300 363 778.

In extreme circumstances that warrant a student being immediately suspended or expelled would be the following:

- is in possession of a firearm, prohibited weapon.
- uses, supplies, or is in possession of, a suspected illegal substance.

In School and Short Suspension

In School and Short Suspensions (1 to 2 days) may be imposed for the following reasons and will be reported in the following categories:

1. Continued Disobedience. This includes but is not limited to breaches of the school discipline code such as: refusal to obey staff instructions; defiance/oppositional behaviour; disrupting other students.
2. Aggressive Behaviour. This includes but is not limited to: hostile behaviour directed towards students, members of staff or other persons, including damaging the property of the school or students; bullying (including cyber bullying); verbal abuse and abuse transmitted electronically such as by email, SMS text messages or by other electronic means.

A formal disciplinary interview will be held with the student and his parents/guardians prior to making the decision to impose an in school or short suspension. The Head of School will ensure that they are given explicit information about the nature of the allegation(s) and is given the opportunity to consider and respond

to the allegation(s). The key features of the interview will be taken down in writing and logged onto SENTRAL, our school database.

Deciding on and notifying parents/carers of a Suspension:

The following steps apply to in school, short and long suspensions.

1. The decision to suspend will be made by the Head of School
2. Head of School will convene a meeting during which the parents of the student are informed of the precise grounds on which suspension is being considered. In the instance of a long suspension, parents/carers will be offered the opportunity to have a support person or observer at formal interviews
3. The student along with his parent/s will be given the opportunity to consider and respond to this information. The parents/student's response must be considered as part of this process.
4. Notification of suspension will be made to the parents in writing within 48 hours following immediate verbal notification. Reasonable steps taken include:
 - Notice of the suspension
 - the date and probable duration of the suspension
 - the category and specific reasons for the suspension
 - the clear expectation that the student will continue with studies while suspended and, in the case of a long suspension, that a study program will be provided.
 - the importance of parents cooperatively working with the school in resolving the matter
 - parents' responsibility for the care and safety of the student while under suspension, and the clear expectation that the student should not be on School grounds without the prior permission of the Principal or Head of School.

Appeals

Parents of students may appeal the suspension, if they consider that correct procedures have not been followed. The parents/carer may appeal against the decision writing to the Principal, setting out the reasons why the Principal should not act on the recommendation.

Serious circumstances of misbehaviour may lead to the expulsion of a student. Where this step is considered, particular emphasis must be given to procedural fairness i.e. the right to be heard, to know why the action is being taken, to know the allegations, the right to respond and to expect a fair and impartial decision.

Any appeal must be provided to the Principal no later than 48 hours after the parent/carer have been advised of the recommendation.

If no appeal is made within the time specified, the Principal will decide whether to accept the recommendation and advise the student and parents/carer of the decision.

If the parents/carer have lodged an appeal, the Principal will consider the recommendations and the reasons provided by the student or parents/carer for not following the recommendation and will decide whether to accept the recommendation of the Head of School.

The Principal will then advise the student and parents/carer of the decision.

The decision made by the Principal will be final.

Expulsion - General Principles

In serious circumstances of misbehaviour, the Head of School may recommend to expel a student of any age from the School. Expulsion is when a student is permanently removed from the school. The school will make every effort to support students and their families before a decision to expel is made. In all cases where consideration is being given to expelling a student, the gravity of the circumstances requires that particular emphasis be given to procedural fairness.

Expulsion from School for Misbehaviour

When considering expelling a student for misbehaviour, the Head of School will:

- Ensure, except because of a most serious incident, that all appropriate student welfare and discipline strategies have been implemented and documented.
- Convene a formal disciplinary interview with the parents and student. The Head of School will ensure that they are given explicit information about the nature of the allegation(s) and are given the opportunity to consider and respond to the allegation(s).
- The key features of the interview should be taken down in writing.
- Offer parents/carers the opportunity to have a support person or observer at formal interviews
- Place the student on suspension pending the outcome of the decision-making process.
- Notify the parents, in writing, that expulsion from the school is being considered, giving reasons for the possible action.
- Provide parents with information of the allegations.
- Allow seven school days for students and parents to respond.
- Consider any response from the student and parents before proceeding further.
- Discuss with the student and parents the implications of expulsion.

Having reached a decision to expel a student from the School, the Head of School will:

- Inform the parents in writing. This formal advice should also restate the right to appeal the decision.

Expulsion Appeal and Exclusionary Action:

Before a student is expelled, all appropriate welfare and behavioural strategies need to be implemented and documented by the Head of School. The student and his parents/carers must be given detailed information in a face-to-face meeting with the Head of School regarding the allegation/incident and be provided with the opportunity to respond.

Any response from the student's parents/carers must be considered before expelling the student. The student's parents/carers must be notified in writing of the decision to expel the student, a copy of documentation relating to the inappropriate behaviour and seven days to respond.

Any appeal must be provided to the Principal no later than 48 hours days after the parent/carer have been advised of the recommendation.

If no appeal is made within the time specified, the Principal will decide whether to accept the recommendation and advise the student and parents/carer of the decision.

If the parents/carer have lodged an appeal, the Principal and School Board will consider the decision and the reasons provided by the student or parents/carer for not following the decision and will decide whether to accept the recommendation of the Head of School.

The Principal will then advise the student and parents/carer of the decision.

The decision made by the Principal will be final.

Coogee Boys' Preparatory School does not exclude students.