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# Student Behaviour Management Policy

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# 1 Purpose

Positive and respectful behaviour is critical for student engagement and wellbeing, and encourages learning and attainment.

This Policy supports the safety and wellbeing of students, staff and parents (see definition) in all Tasmanian Government schools and articulates the Department for Education, Children and Young People's (DECYP) obligations under sections 128-136 of the [Education Act 2016](#) (Tas).

This Policy outlines:

- what constitutes unacceptable behaviours for students
- requirements for responding to unacceptable behaviour of students
- minimum standards in preventing and responding to bullying.

All Tasmanian Government schools must implement this Policy.

## 2 Policy statement

Schools use a range of approaches to support and promote safe and respectful student behaviour.

All students and staff have a right not to be subjected to discrimination, including that based on sex, race, religion, disability, sexual orientation or gender identity.

When responding to unacceptable student behaviour schools use harm minimisation, trauma-informed, and restorative practices and principles, and consider the impact of any behavioural response on student learning. This supports DECYP strategic objectives of ensuring children and young people are known, heard and included, safe in all environments, well and thriving, and learning more every day.

Safeguarding the rights of all children and young people to have an education, to be heard, and to be kept safe from harm is a priority for DECYP. Safeguarding describes a culture in which every person understands their responsibility to uphold the rights of the child and to have the child at the centre of every decision that affects them. This culture of continuous improvement has prevention as its overriding objective while it strengthens awareness, sensitivity and responsiveness to the signs and effects of trauma or abuse.

Schools must make this Policy available on their school website. Schools may develop school-specific guidelines to support implementation of this Policy in their school context.

This Policy supports implementation of requirements under:

- [\*Secretary's Instruction No 3 for Unacceptable Behaviour of Students and Volunteers at, and Visitors to, State Schools or School Activities\*](#)
- [\*Secretary's Instruction No 4 for Suspension, Exclusion, Expulsion or Prohibition of State School Students\*](#)
- [\*Ministerial Instruction No 7 for Eliminating or Ameliorating Risks to Health and Safety of Persons at School.\*](#)

The content of this Policy aligns with [DECYP values](#), reflecting our commitment to ensuring that the values are reflected in all policy and processes. This Policy is also supported by broader DECYP approaches to inclusive practice, student engagement, and wellbeing for learning, as outlined in the [Learning - School Improvement](#) focus area of [Our Approach to School Improvement](#).

This Policy does not include behaviour of adults or volunteers at schools. See the [Respectful School Visitor and Volunteer Behaviour Procedure](#).

Implementation of this Policy is supported by the [Student Behaviour Management Procedure](#).

### 3 Roles and responsibilities

Parents are expected to work in partnership with the school, services providers, and the wider school community to support both their child's behaviour development and a positive, safe, inclusive and respectful school environment.

DECYP schools have a responsibility to use harm minimisation, trauma-informed, and restorative practices and principles to support our students to reflect on their behaviour and to build and repair affected relationships. This responsibility involves:

- addressing unacceptable behaviour that occurs at school in supervised duty locations and during supervised duty hours, or at school activities
- assisting others (such as parents and service providers) to resolve unacceptable behaviour between students that occurs outside of school or school activities, if we become aware of such behaviour and where that behaviour is having a negative impact on student learning and/or wellbeing.

### 4 Unacceptable behaviour of students

- This Policy supports implementation of [Secretary's Instruction No 3 for Unacceptable Behaviour of Students and Volunteers at, and Visitors to, State Schools or School Activities](#), which outlines what constitutes unacceptable behaviour of a student at a school.
- What constitutes unacceptable behaviour is dependent on the context and should be considered on a case-by-case basis. We recognise that unacceptable behaviour may be associated with factors such as disability, trauma, abuse or learning difficulties.

#### 4.1 Managing health and safety risks

- A principal must develop and maintain strategies to remove or reduce the likelihood of a student from posing a health and safety risk to themselves or any other person at the school.
- All schools will do what is reasonably practicable to assess and address the health and safety risks posed by a student's behaviour. This includes support for students with risk-related behaviours in accessing education, while also managing health and safety risks (including mental health impacts) to the student and other persons at the school.
- The scope of these potential responses is outlined in [Ministerial Instruction No 7 for Eliminating or Ameliorating Risks to Health and Safety of Persons at School](#) and [Secretary's Instruction No 10](#)

for Transfer of a State School Student, which may include transfer of a student between classes or between schools.

## 4.2 Roads on campus

The Education Regulations 2017 provide a principal of a Tasmanian Government school with the authority to determine the conditions under which vehicles may be driven, ridden, parked and removed on or from a campus of the school. A breach of these conditions by a student constitutes unacceptable behaviour and can be managed in accordance with this Policy.

# Bullying

## 5.1 Definition

Tasmania agreed to the following national definition of bullying through the Education Council in 2018:

- 'Bullying is an ongoing and deliberate misuse of power in relationships through repeated verbal, physical and/or social behaviour that intends to cause physical, social and/or psychological harm.
- Bullying can involve an individual or a group misusing their power, or perceived power, over one or more persons who feel unable to stop it from happening.
- Bullying can happen in person or online, via various digital platforms and devices and it can be obvious (overt) or hidden (covert). Bullying behaviour is repeated, or has the potential to be repeated, over time (for example, through sharing of digital records).
- Bullying of any form or for any reason can have immediate, medium and long-term effects on those involved, including bystanders.
- Single incidents and conflict or fights between equals, whether in person or online, are not defined as bullying.'<sup>1</sup>

## 5.2 Preventing bullying

DECYP does not tolerate any form of bullying in Tasmanian Government schools.

Bullying can have a serious impact on the safety and wellbeing of children and young people.

Ensuring that students are safe and free from discrimination, harassment and bullying is a shared responsibility between school staff, parents, students and the community.

Schools use a range of approaches to support and promote safe and respectful student behaviour:

- Preventing and responding to bullying, including cyberbullying, is a shared responsibility of all staff, students, and parents. All members of our school can contribute to the prevention of bullying by modelling and promoting appropriate behaviour and respectful relationships.
- Schools have a responsibility to support students involved in bullying (including cyberbullying) which is affecting a student's learning and/or wellbeing at school, even when the unacceptable behaviour has occurred off school campus and/or outside of school hours.

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<sup>1</sup> Bullying. No Way!

- When addressing bullying, non-punitive and restorative approaches should be utilised. Both the student being bullied and the student who was bullying must be provided with support (for example, informal support from staff, formal counselling).

Schools are to encourage students impacted by bullying (including those who are witnesses) to report concerns to school staff as soon as possible.

Professional learning should be used to build the capacity of school staff to maintain positive classroom environments, identify early signs of bullying and respond with appropriate intervention strategies.

### 5.3 Responding to bullying

- When responding to bullying, schools must ensure that:
  - any responses to behaviour take into account that unacceptable behaviour may be associated with factors such as disability, trauma, abuse or learning difficulties
  - approaches are non-punitive and restorative
  - all reported incidents of bullying are taken seriously, responded to sensitively, appropriately investigated and addressed
  - all students involved in or impacted by the bullying behaviour are provided with support (for example, informal support from staff, formal counselling)
  - details of the incident and the actions taken are recorded appropriately.

## 6 Responding to unacceptable behaviour of students

- Responses must take into account that unacceptable behaviour may be associated with factors such as disability, trauma, abuse or learning difficulties.
- When responding to unacceptable behaviour of a student at school or a school activity, teachers and principals must:
  - identify whether the unacceptable behaviour poses a risk to the health and safety of the student themselves, to staff and/or to other students
  - seek to understand the issues contributing to the student's unacceptable behaviour before applying behavioural responses such as suspension, unless there is an immediate risk to the health or safety of others
  - apply strategies and approaches that are developmentally appropriate for the student
  - support the student's continued learning and access to education
  - have in place a range of escalating approaches and strategies that are underpinned by harm minimisation, trauma-informed, or restorative, practices and principles.
- This [may](#) include:
  - talking to the student about their unacceptable behaviour
  - understanding whether there is anything going on outside of school that may be impacting on their behaviour (if a child discloses any form of abuse follow the process in the [Mandatory Reporting Procedure](#))
  - seeking appropriate support for the student
  - seeking appropriate support for staff affected either directly or vicariously (see [Employee Wellbeing Support Services](#) and [Principal Wellbeing Individual Supports](#)).

- Any incidents, disclosures or suspicions of abuse between students (at school, a school activity or outside of school), including harmful sexual behaviour and grooming, must also be reported and actioned in accordance with the [Mandatory Reporting Procedure](#) and the [Flowchart for Responding to incidents, disclosures or suspicions of harmful sexual behaviour](#).

## 6.1 School dress code

- Secretary's Instruction No 6 for State School Student Dress Code* requires principals to detail how non-compliance with dress code or uniform will be responded to in their school. Students' circumstances and capacity to comply will be considered when determining the appropriate response. Behavioural responses for non-compliance will not impact the learning of the student unless a safety requirement has not been met (for instance, if a student is wearing 'open-toed' shoes they may not be able to participate in a workshop activity).

## 6.2 Unacceptable behaviour outside of a school environment

- Unacceptable behaviour outside of school may include, but not be limited to, bullying (including cyberbullying), harmful sexual behaviour, discrimination and/or behaviour that is likely to bring a school into disrepute.
- If a school is made aware that unacceptable behaviour between students has taken place outside of school, and that behaviour is having a negative impact on student learning and/or wellbeing at school, the school is to use restorative practices and principles to assist in minimising the harm and restoring the relationships.
- Detention, suspension, exclusion, expulsion or prohibition must only be applied when unacceptable behaviour of a student occurs at school in supervised duty locations and during supervised duty hours, or at a school activity.

## 7 Applying behavioural responses

- A behaviour response is a school response to unacceptable behaviour which can range from the use of harm minimisation, trauma-informed, or restorative practices and principles to a response that involves loss of privileges or time away from school (for example, detention, suspension, further suspension, exclusion, expulsion or prohibition).
- Research conducted both in Australia and internationally has identified that behavioural responses resulting in time away from school lead to students' disengagement. Therefore, these responses must only be used as a last resort or to ensure the safety of students and staff at the school. This approach may be adopted particularly when the unacceptable behaviour does not impact the health, safety and learning of others.
- Detention, suspension, exclusion, expulsion and prohibition must only be imposed for unacceptable behaviour of a student that occurred at school in supervised duty locations and during supervised duty hours, or at a school activity.
- Any behavioural response must be a proportionate response to the unacceptable behaviour.

- When considering whether to apply a behavioural response, consideration must be given to how often the unacceptable behaviour occurs, its duration and any other patterns relevant to the unacceptable behaviour.
- Alternative educational instruction must be made available for the student by the principal during a period of suspension, further suspension or exclusion to ensure continued learning and engagement, and may provide the student with an opportunity to reflect on the unacceptable behaviour.

## 8 Detention and in-school suspension

- Detention and in-school suspension must be delivered during supervised duty hours and in a high-traffic area of the school that can be observed by other staff.
- If detention, or its equivalent (noting that some schools do not use this terminology), is used as a behavioural response, the principal must follow the detention requirements outlined in the [Student Behaviour Management Procedure](#).
- If in-school suspension is used as a behavioural response, the principal must follow the in-school suspension requirements outlined in the [Student Behaviour Management Procedure](#).

## 9 Suspension, period of further suspension, and exclusion

### 9.1 Suspension requirements

- Suspension will only be applied by the principal.
- Periods of suspension should be seen as a continuum. More serious instances of unacceptable behaviour might warrant a 10-day suspension, while the most serious instances might be referred to the relevant authority for a period of further suspension (up to 10 more days), exclusion, expulsion or prohibition. Processes for managing suspensions are outlined in the [Student Behaviour Management Procedure](#).
- The principal will not impose suspensions consecutively in response to the same instance of unacceptable behaviour.
- Suspensions should end during the term in which they are applied, to ensure a student can re-enter the school at the beginning of the subsequent term. Suspensions may only apply across school terms where there are exceptional circumstances and where approval has been given by the Director Student Support.

#### 9.1.1 Non-urgent suspension

- Before the principal can issue a non-urgent suspension to a student for unacceptable behaviour, they must first attempt to resolve the behaviour by:
  - seeking to understand the issues contributing to the student's unacceptable behaviour, whether they be school-based issues or issues outside of the school that are impacting on the student's behaviour (for example, family or relationship problems)

- providing assistance or referral to appropriate supports
- talking to the student about acceptable and unacceptable behaviour at school, and the process if the unacceptable behaviour continues
- involving the parents in discussion on how to address the student's unacceptable behaviour
- the use of other strategies outlined in this Policy.
- Non-urgent suspension must only be used where harm minimisation or restorative practices and principles are unable to resolve the factors contributing to the unacceptable behaviour.

### 9.1.2 Immediate suspension

- The principal will only immediately suspend a student where the principal determines that:
  - the student has behaved or is behaving in an unacceptable manner in accordance with Secretary's Instruction No 3 for Unacceptable Behaviour of Students and Volunteers at, and Visitors to, State Schools or School Activities, **and**
  - the behaviour posed or poses a risk to the health or safety of the student themselves, another school student, staff, or another person at the school, **and**
  - that risk may be removed only by the immediate removal of the student from the school.

## 9.2 Exclusion requirements

- A period of exclusion may be granted where processes for managing unacceptable behaviour have not resolved the behaviour and a more serious response is required or further time is needed to make arrangements for the student's re-entry to school.
- Requests for approval of exclusion will be forwarded to Student Support Leaders and the Director Student Support.

## 9.3 Beyond suspension, further suspension or exclusion

- If the principal or the Director Student Support believes that the unacceptable behaviour is so serious that expulsion or prohibition may be more appropriate they will refer the matter to the Deputy Secretary for Schools and Early Years.

## 9.4 Educational instructional requirements

- The principal must provide students who have been suspended, further suspended or excluded with appropriate educational instruction until they return to school.
- If the principal is unable to arrange for educational instruction to be provided to the student before they commence suspension (for example, where the suspension occurs late in the school day), a parent may be required to collect the educational instruction from the school the following school day.
- The principal may also consider emailing the work to be completed where it is known that the student has internet and computer access.
- School staff will assist the principal to determine appropriate educational instruction, including the preparation of material as appropriate.
- The principal must arrange for review of the educational instruction as part of the re-entry process.

- Students are expected to complete the educational instruction provided to them.
- Parents should support their child to complete the educational instruction provided (for instance, this could include contacting the school for support or advice, or in the case of a suspension of 6 days or more, a further suspension, or an exclusion, liaising with the ~~teacher~~ member of the school leadership team (or their delegate) assigned as a contact point).

## 10 Re-entry to school

- The school must consider the student's transition back to school and any disruption to their learning as a result of a period of suspension, further suspension, exclusion or expulsion from attending a Tasmanian Government school.
- The school must have a process for the student to re-enter the school following a period of suspension, further suspension or exclusion to support the student to build and repair relationships that have been affected by their behaviour and develop any strategies that may be necessary to support the student to re-engage in learning.
- The purpose of a re-entry conference is to ensure a mutual understanding between the student, parent and staff for the future direction of the student's learning and expected behaviour. Unless the student is an independent student over the age of 18, a parent must attend the re-entry conference to assist this process.
- Some parents may not be supportive of the re-entry process. In such cases, the following guidance applies:
  - If there are no safety concerns regarding a student re-entering school a parent's refusal to attend a conference must not be used as a reason to delay a student's re-entry, as a rolling suspension is in breach of the [Education Act 2016 \(Tas\)](#).
  - If there are safety concerns around a student's re-entry and the cooperation of the student's parent(s) has not been forthcoming the principal should contact [Student Support](#) for guidance.
- The re-entry process must include supports for anyone who was significantly impacted by the student's behaviour.
- The re-entry conference is to reference documented support strategies to help manage any underlying behavioural issues or learning needs where these already exist, or is to include documented support strategies where these have not yet been established.

## 11 Related policies

- [Attendance Policy](#)
- [Personal Information Protection Policy](#)
- [Restrictive Practices Policy](#) (staff only)
- [Risk Management Policy](#)
- [Student Engagement Policy](#)
- [Work Health and Safety Policy](#) (staff only)

## 12 Related procedures

- [Attendance Procedure](#)
- [Duty of Care for Students on Departmental Educational Sites Procedure](#) (staff only)
- [Enrolment Procedure](#) (staff only)
- [Mandatory Reporting Procedure](#)
- [Respectful School Visitor and Volunteer Behaviour Procedure](#)
- [Restrictive Practices Procedure](#)
- [Risk Management Procedure](#) (staff only)
- [Student Behaviour Management Procedure](#) (staff only)
- [Student Engagement Procedure](#) (staff only)

## 13 Supporting information/tools

- [De-escalation Response Plan](#)
- [Education Act 2016 - Frequently Asked Questions for Parents](#)
- [Guide to Our Approach to School Improvement](#)
- [Keeping children safe against discrimination, bullying and harassment](#)
- [Office of Safeguarding Children and Young People](#)
- [Respectful Schools, Respectful Behaviour](#)
- [Safeguarding Framework](#)
- School-specific policies and documents including the Respectful School Volunteer and Visitor Policy
- [Staying Safe Online](#)
- [Student Behaviour in Tasmanian Government Schools](#)
- [Trauma Informed Practice Good Teaching guide](#)

## 14 Definitions

### **Abuse (child abuse)**

Any or all types of abuse and neglect, including physical abuse, emotional abuse, psychological abuse, sexual abuse, and exposure to or involvement in domestic and family violence.

### **Act**

Means the [Education Act 2016](#) (Tas) unless specified otherwise.

### **Bullying**

An ongoing and deliberate misuse of power in relationships through repeated verbal, physical and/or social behaviour that intends to cause physical, social and/or psychological harm.

**Behavioural response**

A response to unacceptable behaviour which can range from the use of restorative practices and principles to a response that involves loss of privileges or time away from school (such as, detention, suspension, further suspension, exclusion, expulsion or prohibition).

**Cyberbullying**

Cyberbullying is an alternative label for online bullying, and describes bullying carried out through the internet and mobile devices.

**Detention**

Any relatively short period when a student is required to remain at school/in the classroom in a student's 'non-class' time (for example, recess, lunchtime, recreation time, after school). Detention provides an opportunity for students to undertake additional learning in the school environment.

**Digital record**

Text, graphic, audio, video and other content that is captured, uploaded and communicated online and through mobile devices.

**Discrimination**

A less favourable treatment of a person because of a personal characteristic, such as race, gender, sexual orientation or disability, or treating everyone the same way where doing so has a disadvantageous effect on a person or group of people because of a shared personal characteristic.

**Exclusion**

The temporary withdrawal of a student's requirement to attend school for more than two weeks.

**Expulsion**

The full-time withdrawal of a student's right to attend a particular Tasmanian Government school.

**Government school**

Means a State school, as defined in the *Education Act 2016*.

**Grooming**

Any online or in-person behaviour intended to manipulate and control a child, their family, kin or caregivers, or other support networks or organisations, with the aim of gaining access to the child, obtaining the child's compliance, maintaining the child's silence, and/or avoiding discovery of sexual abuse. Grooming may be difficult to identify and can be done by people already known to the child, including by a family member, kin or carer.

**Harassment**

Involves unwanted and one-sided words or actions towards another person (or persons) that offend, demean, annoy, alarm or abuse. If harassment is repeatedly directed towards the same person, and especially if it continues after the targeted person has asked them to stop, it is considered to be bullying.

**Harm minimisation**

The aim to reduce the adverse health, social and economic consequences of alcohol, smoking products and other drugs for individuals, their families and friends, and the community by employing a range of approaches to prevent or reduce drug-related harm, including prevention, early intervention, specialist treatment, supply control, safer drug use and abstinence.

### **Harmful sexual behaviour**

Developmentally inappropriate sexual behaviour displayed by children and young people that may be harmful or abusive, encompassing a range of behaviours, from problematic to abusive, that are directed towards other children, young people or adults, and that may be harmful to those displaying the behaviour as well as those to whom it is directed.

### **In-school suspension**

The withdrawal of a student from their regular class/classes for a period of time determined by the principal. During an in-school suspension a student remains at the school but works away from other students under the supervision of teaching staff.

### **Parent**

As defined in Part 1, Section 5 of the *Education Act 2016* (Tas), a parent includes:

- a legal guardian of a child
- another person who has the care, control or custody of a child
- another person who generally acts in the place of a parent of a child and has done so for a significant length of time.

### **Principal**

The person in charge of a school or their delegate.

### **Prohibition**

The full-time withdrawal of a student's right to attend a specific Tasmanian Government school or any Tasmanian Government school.

### **Punitive**

Inflicting or intended as punishment.

### **Responsibilities: 'must', 'is to', and 'may'**

Meaning of 'must', 'is to' and 'may':

- The word 'must' is to be construed as being mandatory.
- The words 'is to' and 'are to' are to be construed as being directory.
- The word 'may' is to be construed as being discretionary or enabling, as the context requires.

### **Restorative practices**

A way of viewing relationship-building and behaviour support in schools that work to strengthen community among students and between students, teachers, and parents through educative processes. Restorative approaches focus on the problem, not the person, and look at the harm that has been done and the obligation on the part of those responsible to 'right the wrong' as much as possible. Restorative practices in schools are not limited to formal processes but are a continuum ranging from informal (for example, class circles, impromptu restorative conferences or

teacher-student conversations) to formal conferences (for example, restorative conferences or family group conferences).

### **School activity (or event)**

School-endorsed activities for their students that are held:

- at a venue which is outside of school campus or school property
- on school campus but outside of school hours. School activities may include a sports or swimming carnival, an excursion, school camp, or an end-of-year concert.

### **School Association**

Made up of the parents, staff and approved community members of a school. An association exists for each Tasmanian Government school, including primary schools, high schools, district schools and colleges.

### **School Association Committee**

Represents the School Association and undertakes administrative and decision-making activities on behalf of the Association.

### **School days**

The days on which the school is to be open for educational instruction.

### **Secretary**

Means the Secretary of the Department for Education, Children and Young People.

### **Supervised duty**

The locations and times, as determined by the principal, at which staff have a duty of care for students.

### **Suspension**

The temporary withdrawal of a student's right to attend school for a period of two weeks or less (maximum 10 school days).

## **15 Legislation**

[Child and Youth Safe Organisations Act 2023](#)

[Education Act 2016](#) (Tas)

[Ministerial Instruction No 7 for Eliminating or Ameliorating Risks to Health and Safety of Persons at School](#) requires a principal to develop and maintain strategies to remove or reduce the likelihood of a student's behaviour posing a risk to the physical or psychological health or safety of the child or other persons at the school.

Schools must do what is reasonably practicable to assess and address the health and safety risks posed by a student's behaviour. This includes support for students with risk-related behaviours in accessing education, while also managing health and safety risks to the student and other persons at the school.

Secretary's Instruction No 3 for Unacceptable Behaviour of Students and Volunteers at, and Visitors to, State Schools or School Activities outlines the behaviour that constitutes unacceptable behaviour by students and volunteers at, and visitors to, State schools and school activities, the management of such behaviour by schools, and the processes that a Principal is to develop as the response to unacceptable behaviour, including the management of such behaviour.

Secretary's Instruction No 4 for Suspension, Exclusion, Expulsion or Prohibition of State School Students outlines the processes for responding to unacceptable behaviour of a student before suspension of that student may be used, processes to be followed when issuing a detention or immediate or non-urgent suspension, and the requirement for education instruction during suspension.

Secretary's Instruction No 10 for Transfer of a State School Student outlines the circumstances that may constitute grounds for the transfer of a State school student and the processes to be followed in managing a student's transfer under the specified circumstances.

## 16 References

Australian Education Authorities (2021) *Bullying. No Way!* Available at: [Understanding bullying \(bullyingnoway.gov.au\)](https://www.bullyingnoway.gov.au) (Accessed 1 November 2023).

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**This document replaces:** Respectful Student Behaviour Policy