



Under the Stewardship of Mary Aikenhead Ministries

## St Vincent's College

### Management of Student Behaviour and Discipline Policy & Procedures

#### PREAMBLE

St Vincent's College is a Mary Aikenhead Ministry in the tradition of the Sisters of Charity. We are called to develop in each member of our community a contemporary understanding and application of the charism of Mary Aikenhead and the spirituality of the Sisters of Charity, and the Mary Aikenhead Ministries' mission, vision and values of justice, love, compassion and hope.

#### RATIONALE

The College Mission and College Values inform all proactive interventions and responses regarding student conduct and engagement.

All members of the community are encouraged to take responsibility for their actions - living our values of Generosity of Spirit, Hope, Justice, Respect, Service of the Poor.

*"May we always act with justice and truth" - Mary Aikenhead.*

**In line with such values and in an effort to ensure a safe and secure environment for all students, corporal punishment is not permitted in any form under any circumstances by members of the College staff, volunteers or any other persons associated with the College. In the event of any such conduct, reference will be made to the appropriate legislation and incidents will be reported to the relevant authorities.**

Student management and discipline is a shared responsibility of all staff of the College. Their professional decisions are guided by:

- Gospel and College Values
- The principles of restorative justice
- Best practices in child safe guarding
- Catholic social teaching

Staff are supported by professional learning and protocols established and approved by the COR Team. Staff are encouraged to respond to any incidents that breach behavioural expectations using the principle of subsidiarity, i.e. at the most appropriate level; there is a referral system to respond to serious breaches.

Parents are an important partner in maintain good discipline and student management. Through their acceptance, and signing of their enrolment contract, they enter into an agreement to support the Student Responsibilities and College Expectations. They have an important role in upholding expectations of uniform, punctuality and school attendance, appropriate use of technology and conducting themselves respectfully whenever they are engaging with College staff. Parents are notified of any serious discipline breach.



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## PROCEDURES

Students and their parents/carers are required to sign the Student and Parents/Carers Agreement that appears in the front of the Student College Diary to demonstrate an understanding and acceptance of their responsibilities as members of the St Vincent's College community. It is signed in good faith and witnessed by the Tutor teacher. Students are to have a voice in developing and owning Personal Responsibility.

These responsibilities include **but are not limited to** the following expectations of **conduct** and apply when a student wears the College uniform, even when not on the College grounds:

- I agree that it is of the utmost importance that I respect the dignity of fellow students and teachers alike, by treating them with care, courtesy and fairness.
- I agree to abide by the St Vincent's College Policies and Procedures, and any subsequent updates.
- I agree to care for and be respectful of all College property and the College environment
- I agree to act sustainably and discard of any litter/recycling appropriately
- I assume responsibility, with the help of my teachers, for my own learning and study and for the submission of coursework.
- I agree to respect the importance of learning and acknowledge the need to:
  - Come prepared for class with necessary equipment
  - Engage in learning activities
  - Listen attentively to teachers and other students
  - Respect and encourage others in the classroom
- I agree to abide by the regulations which forbid the use and/or possession of tobacco vaping products, alcohol and illegal drugs, and understand such behaviour may result in forfeiture of my place at St Vincent's College. This expectation applies to all the following circumstances:
  - On my way to and from school
  - At school/Boarding House
  - On excursions, retreats, socials or any school-based activity
  - Wearing the College uniform
  - Being in the presence of another student/s who has tobacco, alcohol and/or illegal drugs in these school contexts.
  - Posting images of self or other students with such products on social media where the College is identified.

Note that the College must report knowledge of criminal activity to police authorities.

### Digital Citizenship Expectations

- I acknowledge that mobile phones and other electronic devices may be brought to the College. I understand that the use of mobile phones, laptops and other similar devices is a privilege, not a right, which may be rescinded by the College at any time. I agree to use technology responsibly and abide by the College policies and procedures in place.
- I understand that taking or using photographs of staff, students, College uniform or buildings, the College's name and crest without specific written permission is a breach of the privacy laws of NSW. I agree that I will not use any images related to the College (including staff and students) without permission and consent. I understand that this includes posting such images on social media via any type of technology.



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Stage	Mobile Phone Allowance
<b>Stage 4 &amp; 5</b> <b>(Years 7 - 10)</b>	<p>Unless specified otherwise, students are only permitted to use their mobile phone prior to the 8:35am morning bell, and after the 3:00pm afternoon bell.</p> <p>At all times throughout the day, phones must be kept 'locked' in lockers, always on silent/off (with vibration alert switched off).</p>
<b>Stage 6</b> <b>(Years 11 - 12)</b>	<p>Unless specified otherwise, students are only permitted to use their mobile phone:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Prior to the 8:35am morning bell</li> <li>2. At recess and lunch (yard and deck only)</li> <li>3. After the 3:00pm afternoon bell</li> </ol> <p>At all times throughout the day, phones must be either kept in students' pockets or 'locked' in their lockers. Mobile phones must always be either on silent/off (with vibration alert switched off).</p>

### Responding to breaches of Student responsibility and College Expectations

The below acts as a brief for student and parent/carers information.

Our priority is student safety, healthy relationships and positive learning.

Students hold the responsibility to adhere to College expectations. Parents and carers are asked to be proactive in communicating with the Tutor teacher on occasions when a student may have a valid reason for not fulfilling their responsibilities as a student (punctuality, uniform, PDHPE/Dance/Drama gear).

In the case a student breaches the College expectations and/or does not fulfil their student responsibilities adequately, the following support interventions are in place. Please be aware that students may need to remain at school beyond 3pm.

### Amber and Red Breaches

Amber Breach	Support Intervention
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lateness</li> <li>• Breach of Mobile Phone Policy (<i>phone confiscated and held in Student Services</i>)</li> <li>• Incorrect uniform</li> <li>• Disregard for safety of property (<i>examples: backpack carried or left around school, litter, gum etc</i>)</li> <li>• Lack of preparation for class (<i>including required PDHPE/Dance/Drama gear – further communication home as needed</i>)</li> </ul>	<p>As directed, students must be prepared to remain at school until 3:15pm daily.</p>
Red Breach	Support Intervention
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accumulation of three Amber Breaches</li> <li>• Disruption to class</li> <li>• As issued by College Dean</li> </ul>	<p>As directed, students must be prepared to remain at school until 3:25pm on Thursday afternoon.</p> <p>Notification will be sent to parents and student.</p>
<p>Note: The concerning nature of persistent breaches will warrant more serious intervention on a case by case basis. Please note that the breaches listed below are non-exhaustive. Any updates made throughout the year will naturally involve students being informed via the usual communication channels.</p>	



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### **Responding to incidents where a student has caused harm to person/s, property or reputation of the College.**

All actions in response to our care and management of students are to have meaning so that they are opportunities for learning and that the processes themselves create a safe environment that gives respect to each individual. In our Ignatian context, opportunity for reflection and conversation is critical for ownership and growth to take place. Relationships of trust in which we can recognise and admit to our goodness and our failings are essential to enable the conditions for adolescents to engage willingly in this reflection, dialogue and consequent action to restore and improve behaviour and relationships.

### **Restorative Practices**

As a school we believe that our approach to student behaviour management should primarily be an educative one. That is, the fundamental aim of our behaviour management philosophy and practice should be for students to learn to be responsible for themselves and their actions and to make genuine, positive contributions to their community.

A restorative approach sees conflict or wrong doing firstly as an opportunity for students to learn about the consequences of their actions, to develop empathy with others, and to seek to make amends in such a way as to strengthen the community bonds that may have been damaged. Restorative Practices is based on the building of positive relationships throughout the school community. This involves staff, students, parents and the wider school community. In broad terms, Restorative Practice is an approach to deal with offending and inappropriate behaviour that focuses on repairing harm done to those relationships and people rather than assigning blame or using punitive punishments. It does this by bringing about a sense of remorse and restorative action on the part of the offender and forgiveness by the person who has been offended/ harmed.

**Restoring relationships in this way is not without consequences.** The person/s who has been hurt is provided opportunity to express the impact of the behaviour and assert what she wants to change in the behaviour / relationship. The person who has engaged in harmful behaviours is provided opportunity to listen to the person/s who has been hurt (or representative), learn about the impact of their actions, express remorse and decide what action she may take to restore the relationship and her self-respect. Often only the person and her supporting adults are aware of the restorative action decided upon. This action aims to provide opportunity to learn from mistakes and change.

### **Procedure for responding to Harmful or Disruptive Behaviour**

A preventative approach is provided through educating students within curriculum and pastoral programs as well as encouraging actions to reduce conflict.

- In the event that a student experiences behaviour which is of concern or harm, the student is encouraged to report the incident to a teacher, or to seek assistance from a trusted adult.
- In the event that concerning behaviour is reported, or a formal allegation received, observed or suspected, the College seeks to apply intervention strategies in a manner which is supportive of and in the best interests of the students to whom they apply
- The College process for responding to students' inappropriate behaviours is based on procedural fairness. A full and proper investigation will occur, and all parties heard. All students will be given opportunity to voice their view on what has taken place. Students will be asked to provide this individually, away from other students, if there is reason to suggest she may be influenced by the presence of other students.



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- If it is a serious issue of allegation of bullying or harm, or patterns of behaviour that is disrespectful or disrupts the learning of others, students and their parents are informed and will be provided with the opportunity to be heard; students will be invited to have a support person present (teacher, parent/carer).
- The strategies will recognise the partnership with parents in the care and welfare of students. For matters deemed serious issues, parents will be notified and invited for a meeting to ensure they are fully informed of the details of the behaviour and the process of response. The College may remove the student from classes until deemed appropriate.
- Intervention strategies will include nominated staff observing and monitoring behaviour, counselling, opportunity for student reflection and service action
- Recipients and perpetrators of hurtful and disrespectful behaviours will be supported and given opportunities for discussion with a teacher and / or College counsellor.
- The student and their parents will be informed of the likely consequences.

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***Consequences and / or sanctions for harmful and disruptive behaviours may involve:***

- Restorative actions appropriate to the particular incident.
- Sanctions and loss of privileges. This could affect students' involvement in out of College or co-curricular activities.
- Behaviour improvement plans constructed in partnership with parents/carers and the College.
- Intervention, counselling, work in partnership with parents.
- Further action at the discretion of the College Principal.

**Structures for Management of Student Behaviour**

Effective communication between the College and family is vital in providing the best care of students and clarity of response when incidents that breach College expectations occur. This communication will be provided from the staff member engaged in the management of the behaviour which will vary according to the situation:

- Classroom teacher
- Head of Department
- Relevant Dean of Secondary (Early/ Middle/ Senior)
- Dean of Boarding
- Pastoral Dean of Students
- Deputy Principal
- Principal



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## SUSPENSION AND EXCLUSION OF STUDENTS

Students are encouraged to develop a sense of responsibility, self-control and self-discipline, and regulate their conduct in accordance with the values of the College. Despite the focus of these positive outcomes, there may be times when the Principal will be required to consider the suspension and/or expulsion of students from the College due to continued behaviours.

Action to suspend or expel a student is a serious matter and will be carried out in a just and equitable manner, taking into account responsibilities to the whole College community based on the principles of natural justice.

### PROCEDURES

#### Suspension

Suspension occurs when a student's attendance at the College has been withdrawn as a disciplinary measure on the authority of the Principal. A short suspension is a suspension from the College for up to three days. An extended suspension is a suspension for more than three days.

Suspension allows the parties involved a period of time to reflect on and enter into dialogue about the behaviours and circumstances that have led to the suspensions, and to focus on the development of an appropriate response and process for a return to the College.

Suspension may be imposed under a variety of circumstances, including:

- Displays disregard for College rules and standards of behaviour
- Actions which endanger the health and safety of members of the College community
- Acts of significant violence or aggression (physical or verbal), destruction of property or theft
- Harassment and abuse of others
- Possession of illegal drugs
- Possession of a prohibited weapon

#### Expulsion

Expulsion occurs when a student's attendance at the College has been totally withdrawn on the authority of the Principal.

Expulsion of a student may occur when:

- The presence of a student continually disrupts the good order of the College
- The presence of the student places the safety of others at risk
- In the event of a student engaging in illegal actions or activity that risks the safety of the students or is likely to harm students in any way.
- A student deliberately and persistently interferes with the rights of other students to learn or teachers to teach including bullying, harassment and victimisation.
- In the case of post compulsory age students, continued unsatisfactory participation in learning





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In most instances before the expulsion of a student, a period or periods of suspension will have been served as a means of managing the unacceptable behaviour. Interventions offered by the College and responsibilities required of the student and parents/carers will have not resulted in demonstration of modified behaviour.

### **Procedures**

Parents/carers are to be included in the process of suspension or expulsion of a student. Students and their parents are to be made aware of the processes that will be followed in dealing with issues of suspension and expulsion.

Where behaviours are emerging which are causing concern which could lead to suspension and/or expulsion, parents/carers should be informed of these, and it should be indicated that the continuation of these behaviours could lead to suspension and ultimately expulsion.

Students will be informed of the behaviours causing concern which lead to the consideration of suspension or expulsion and will be given an opportunity to respond through either an interview with the Principal (or delegate) or a letter written to the Principal. Once the decision to suspend or expel a student has been finalised, the student and her family may request a review of the decision. This process is included at the end of this policy.

Any decisions made to suspend or expel a student will be made on evidence which indicates that the student 'more probably than not' behaved in a manner contrary to expectations of student conduct required by the College. The decision will take into account what is best for the student, other students and the College community.

The Principal ensures that appropriate support and assistance, which may include the College counsellor, has been provided before, or during the time, a student is suspended or expelled.

Appropriate documentation of serious incidents displays of unacceptable behaviours and details relating to suspension and expulsion will be kept on file.

### **Process for Suspension**

1. Generally, a warning would be given before invoking suspension (some behaviours may lead to automatic suspension)
2. When the decision to suspend a student is made, the student is informed on the grounds for the decision and the student must be given the opportunity to respond.
3. Notification of the decision to suspend the student and the grounds for the decision must be made to the parents/carers. This notification should be followed up in writing. The notification should include:
  - a. Reasons for the suspension
  - b. Duration and dates of the suspension
  - c. Venue for the suspension i.e. external or internal
  - d. The parents/cares responsibility for the care and safety of the student during the time of the suspension
  - e. Reference to the expectations regarding schoolwork if required during the suspension period
  - f. Request for support in dealing with the issues involved; and
  - g. Details relating to a follow up interview





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4. A student who has been suspended should not be sent home from the College without the full knowledge of the parent/carer.
5. As soon as possible after the suspension, the Principal arranges a meeting with the parties and other appropriate personnel to deal with issues surrounding the suspension, including conditions and expectations for re-entry into the community.
6. Agreed goals would normally form part of a return to the College after a period of suspension.

#### **Process for Expulsion**

1. Where a recommendation to expel a student is considered, the parents/carers and, where appropriate, the student concerned meet with the Principal to outline the reasons for the proposed expulsion.
2. Parents/Carers and the student involved will be given the opportunity to respond.
3. Where a student is to be expelled from the College, it is envisaged that alternative placements for the student are canvassed with the parents/carers by appropriate personnel, and through appropriate channels.
4. On coming to a decision to expel a student, the parents/carers are notified in writing and the Chair of the College Board is also notified by the Principal before the expulsion is put into effect.

#### **Review of the Decision to Suspend or Expel**

Where a student has been suspended or expelled, parents, caregivers and where applicable students may request a review of that decision. The request should be in writing, setting out the grounds on which the review is being requested.

The fact that a review has been requested does not put on hold a Principal's decision to suspend or expel a student.

In the case where a request has been made to review the expulsion of a student, the student is to remain on suspension until the review has been conducted.

While the review of a decision to suspend or expel a student is being considered the normal processes should be followed to resolve the issues relating to the suspension and in the case of expulsion to explore alternative placements for the student.

#### **REVIEW**

This policy statement was updated in June 2024. It is due for review again in 2026.