Catholic Schools - Behaviour Management Policy

Section 1 - Purpose

(1) This policy is intended to ensure that a positive approach to behaviour management is taken across all Catholic schools of the Catholic Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle (the Diocese), and that other forms of addressing behaviour are the exception not the rule.

(2) This policy is intended to enable Catholic schools of the Diocese to approach behaviour management in schools in a manner that is consistent with the Catholic Social Teachings:

a. Dignity of the Human Person: everyone should be treated with respect and dignity. Each person is equal in dignity and has equal rights as a child of God.
b. Common Good (Community): people realise their dignity and rights in their relationships with others, in community. The rights and duties of individuals and groups must be harmonised under the common good.
c. Solidarity: humans are one family, no matter the differences. We are social by nature and depend on one another. We seek to stand in unity with each other, particularly those who are powerless or disadvantaged, and recognise each persons' rights regardless of our differences.
d. Stewardship: the goods of the earth are gifts from God, and they are intended by God for the benefit of everyone. We are responsible for taking care of the world we live in and for sharing all the wonders and resources the earth gives us.
e. Option for the Poor and Vulnerable: a healthy community can be achieved only if its members give special attention to those with special needs, to those who are poor and on the margins of society. Preference care should be shown to poor and vulnerable people, whose needs and rights are given special attention in God's eyes.
f. Subsidiary Participation: all people have the right to participate in decisions that affect their lives. Subsidiarity requires that decisions are made by the people closest and most affected by the issues and concerns of the community. Only when higher authority is required for the common good should there be intervention.

Section 2 - Scope

(3) This policy applies to all students and workers in the Catholic schools of the Diocese.

Section 3 - Definitions

(4) Common terms and definitions are defined in the glossary.

(5) Terms and definitions in the table below are specific to this policy and critical to its effectiveness:

Term	Definition
Adjustments	An adjustment is a measure or action taken to assist a student with disability to participate in education and training on the same basis as other students. It can include aids, facilities or services that the student requires because of their disability. (DSE, 2005).

Term	Definition
Corporal Punishment	The definition of the Education Act 1990 is adopted: “of a student means the application of physical force in order to punish or correct the student, but does not include the application of force only to prevent personal injury to, or damage to or the destruction of property of, any person (including the student).”
Positive Behaviour for Learning (PB4L)	A research-based assessment, multi-tiered intervention and decision-making process that involves: ♦ developing the functional capabilities of people; ♦ preventing behaviours of concern; and ♦ creating supportive contexts. (Barker, Poed, Whitefield, 2023, 4)
Procedural Fairness (or Procedurally Fair)	Any inquiry or process will afford the respondent and complainant (particularly where the complainant is the alleged victim): ♦ a fair and unbiased process; ♦ all reasonable opportunity to be heard; and ♦ decisions based on the logical and appropriate analysis of available facts. Fundamental elements of procedural fairness are both that a person who may face consequences as a result of the process is informed that this could be the case at the earliest opportunity; and the right of the respondent to receive sufficient information to make an informed response. The civil standard of proof (being a balance of probabilities) is applied and assessed in accordance with the Briginshaw principles, that is, the more serious the consequences the more evidence in the affirmative is needed to substantiate a finding. A procedurally fair process should usually be determined prior to the process commencing, and the process adopted should be commensurate with the seriousness of the allegations made or issues raised as well as be proportionate to the potential consequences of the findings, and may be altered to remain proportionate as further information becomes available.
Restrictive Practice	Means any practice or intervention that has the effect or restricting the rights or freedoms of movement of a person. including: ♦ seclusion; ♦ chemical restraint; ♦ mechanical restraint; ♦ physical restraint; and ♦ environmental restraint. (NDIS Quality and Safeguarding Commission).

Section 4 - Responsibilities

Role	Responsibilities
Director Catholic Schools	Lead the commitment to the policy principles.
Assistant Head Learning & Wellbeing	Develop supporting guidelines and process to support the implementation of this policy, and ensure appropriate resources are available to schools.
Principals	Lead and oversee school staff compliance with this policy, including ensuring all school staff are aware of the policy and their requirements. Seek support of the Catholic Schools (particularly the Assistant Head Learning & Wellbeing) where required for effective implementation. Lead the development/review of school-based PB4L procedures, based upon the consistent and strategic use of evidence-informed classroom practices.
Teachers and school staff	Implement this policy in their practice when supporting and managing the behaviour of students within the school.

Section 5 - Policy Principles

(6) Catholic Schools in the Diocese will take a proactive and positive approach to developing expected standards of behaviour among all of its students by adopting approaches where all students enrolled are supported and

encouraged to:

a. participate positively and engage in their learning and in their community;
b. demonstrate positive and respectful behaviour that will contribute to an inclusive and safe school learning environment;
c. have opportunity to self-advocate as active participants in their own learning and wellbeing; and
d. feel connected to and use their social and emotional skills to be respectful, resilient and safe learners.

(7) Prohibition on Corporal Punishment: The use of corporal punishment, in all forms, across all learning settings, is expressly prohibited.

(8) Positive Behaviour for Learning (PB4L) will be the supported and preferred proactive approach across all Catholic Schools, promoting the use of evidence-based behavioural strategies for all students to prevent academic and behavioural difficulties and increase the likelihood of success, by developing the functional capabilities of people, preventing behaviours of concern, and creating supportive contexts.

(9) Behaviour Support Plans: Behaviour Support Plans assist schools to provide additional support and guidance to identified students, outlining strategies to improve their behaviour. The Behaviour Support Plan will guide the actions of others to respond consistently, to reduce the distress of the individual and to keep everybody safe.

(10) Collaborative curriculum planning should take place within the broader context of personalised planning that includes interventions and other supports to address identified student behavioural learning and support needs. This involves a team who has significant knowledge and understanding of the student. The team comprises parents/carers, teachers and other significant individuals in the student's life. It also includes the student themselves.

(11) Adjustments: where students enrolled have identified needs, including due to disability, their needs will be appropriately adjusted for and adjustments will be documented in line with the procedures and guidelines of the Diocese. All reasonable adjustments need to be in place when assessing behaviour against this policy and related procedures and guidelines. In the event behaviour related to a disability occurs without appropriate adjustments being in place, consideration needs to be given to the appropriateness of the response in the context of the disability, reasonable adjustments, risks and impacts of the behaviour.

(12) Restrictive Practice: the Diocese seeks to, over time, eliminate the use of restrictive practices in all of its schools.

a. Where restrictive practice is required to address the risk a behaviour creates to the student or others in the school environment, the restrictive practice will be:
    i. proportionate to the risk presented;
    ii. the least restrictive option to address the risk;
    iii. documented and reported to the parents or carers of the child and to the Director of Catholic Schools, on each occasion that the practice is used; and
    iv. the documentation and reporting will align with the procedure.
b. Where the use of the practice is not an immediate response to an unplanned situation, the use of a restrictive practice should be:
    i. referenced within a personalised plan, informed by an appropriately qualified practitioner;
    ii. assessed for inherent risk and deemed necessary by the Principal; and
    iii. authorised explicitly by the parents or guardians of the student and underpinned by appropriate and approved training of staff implementing the practices.

(13) Consequences of Behaviour: clearly defined and established classroom expectations help students to feel safe and secure. The expected behaviours are tied to positive consequences when met, and corrective consequences if

unmet/presented:

a. Where it is determined that behaviour is such that a corrective consequence is required to address the behaviour, including where either a suspension or expulsion is appropriate;
b. A corrective consequence will be proportionate to either the risk or impact of the behaviour;
c. In assessing whether a particular corrective consequence for a student is reasonable, decision-makers must have regard for all the relevant circumstances, including:
    i. if the student has a disability (including functional impact and related support needs);
    ii. an understanding of the impacts of trauma and how the school has responded to help students feel safe; and
    iii. the effect of the consequence on anyone else (such as fellow students).
d. Corrective consequence will either be known to, or likely to, impact future occurrences of the behaviour for the student or students generally;
e. The relevant procedures of the Diocese (including, but not limited to, the Suspension and Expulsion Procedures) will be followed;
f. Decision-making will be documented in accordance with applicable procedures and guidelines, and recorded in Compass at the earliest possible opportunity, but at most within TWO school days of the decision, including reporting in mnResponse as necessary;
g. Procedural fairness will be afforded to all students (and where applicable staff or others) in determining the response.

(14) General Safety: all behavioural management strategies and implementation should aim to support both the behaviour and preventing risk of injury or harm to workers and any other person likely to be impacted by the behaviour or the management strategy.

(15) Psychological Safety: any practice or outcome in relation to behavioural management should seek to ensure the psychological safety of all workers, students and members of the school community.

(16) Partnerships: Schools need to ensure that they implement and maintain effective systems for collaboration, such as creating staff teams and fostering genuine partnerships with parents. Collaborative partnerships must be developed that engage onsite diocesan agencies who also support identified students who have a behaviour support plan, including St Nicholas (Early Learning and OOSH) and CatholicCare (Beyond The Gates).

Section 6 - Consequences of Breaching this Policy

(17) Any worker found to be in breach of this policy may be subject to disciplinary action, including where a serious breach occurs, dismissal.

(18) It is recognised this policy is a new policy and during implementation the following approach will be taken to any action for breach of the policy:

a. The Code of Conduct ensures the integrity of this policy.
b. In the first year of the operation of this policy, the approach to enforcement will be generally only a discussion with a worker, and disciplinary action will be limited to circumstances where there is also a breach of the Code of Conduct or their actions constitute a blatant and reckless disregard for this policy.
c. In the second year of the operation of this policy, the approach to enforcement will be generally only disciplinary action at the level of formal warnings or training and development unless there is there is also a breach of the Code of Conduct or their actions constitute a blatant and reckless disregard for this policy.
d. In the third year of this policy, the approach to enforcement will be in accordance with normal processes.

Section 7 - Notations

(19) If there is any inconsistency between a policy document in existence before the commencement of this policy, and a policy document developed after the commencement of this policy, the latter applies to the extent of the inconsistency.

Section 8 - Document Review

(20) This policy will be reviewed when there is a legislative change, organisational change, delegations change, technology change or at least every 3 years to ensure it continues to be current and effective.

Status and Details

Status	Current
Effective Date	14th August 2024
Review Date	12th August 2027
Approval Authority	Chief Executive Officer
Approval Date	12th August 2024
Expiry Date	To Be Advised
Unit Head	Jacqueline Wilkinson Director Catholic Schools
Enquiries Contact	Catholic Schools

Glossary Terms and Definitions

"Principal" - The most senior member of the teaching staff of a school, with responsibility for the effective and efficient day-to-day operations of the school, including compliance with the Education Act 1990.

"Catholic school" - Is one which operates with the consent of the Diocesan Bishop and is one where formation and education are based on the principles of Catholic doctrine. It includes primary, secondary and K-12 schools.

"Catholic Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle (the Diocese)" - The Catholic Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle (the Diocese) is inclusive of all parishes and agencies, communities, ministries and works that are under the authority of the Bishop of Maitland-Newcastle. The Bishop takes his authority from Canon Law (Canons 375-402). The geographical coverage of the Diocese includes all or part of the Newcastle, Lake Macquarie, Maitland, Cessnock, Port Stephens, Singleton, Muswellbrook, Upper Hunter, Dungog and Mid-Coast local government areas, with almost 160,000 Catholics, 38 parishes and serviced by multiple diocesan ministries and agencies. The Diocese is not wholly geographic in nature. There are elements of the Catholic Church operating within the physical boundaries of the Diocese that do not fall under the authority of the Bishop and are not a part of the Diocese. Equally, particular diocesan ministries occur within external institutions (e.g. Prison Chaplaincy, Hospital Chaplaincy).

"Guidelines" - State the general intent of the Diocese or Agency and may be less formal. It directs those subject to the guidelines how to treat or approach a particular situation. Guidelines may be more general in approach or very detailed.

"Procedure" - A document that include details about how the policy will be implemented such as who does what, how and when. It should only be as detailed as required to provide adequate guidance to workers to successfully undertake the activity. Procedures that relate to security, risk mitigation or highly technical activities can be lengthy, highly detailed and complex.

"Worker" - A person who carries out work in any capacity for an employer or 'Person Conducting a Business Undertaking'. This includes: ♦ employees; ♦ teachers; ♦ educators; ♦ contractors; ♦ apprentices; ♦ clergy; ♦ religious; ♦ student placements; ♦ trainees; and ♦ volunteers/unpaid . In the Catholic Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle, 'worker' includes those who carry out work in diocesan parishes, within diocesan agencies and as a part of the diocesan curia.

"Wellbeing" - Feeling comfortable, healthy and happy in various aspects of your life. Not just the absence of illness or injury, but the presence of a positive mental state, a positive sense of self and belonging. In relation to students: strong student wellbeing builds skills to make positive and healthy choices to support learning and achievement. It encompasses the multidimensional and interconnected domains of cognitive, emotional, social, physical and spiritual

wellbeing.

"mnResponse" - A simplified online system used by all agencies and staff that has replaced a range of paper-based forms. It is used for: ♦ incident reporting; ♦ hazard reporting; ♦ feedback and complaints; ♦ compliance and assurance activities; and ♦ Risk Management activities.

"Risk" - The effect of uncertainty on objectives.

"Compass" - A software platform used by diocesan schools as the Student Information System to monitor, record and manage student attendance as well as other information.