

Preamble

Mater Dei School is an independent Catholic school governed by Good Samaritan Education (GSE). Mater Dei School is a coeducational setting for students from Kindergarten to Year 12 with a Mild to Moderate Intellectual Disability.

The management and discipline of students at Mater Dei School Camden flows from the school's Benedictine tradition of respecting the dignity of individuals and their unique contribution to our school community. This policy is guided by the Benedictine value of peace. Benedict describes peace at all levels of our lives beginning with respect for one another.

As an independent Catholic special school, Mater Dei caters for the overall wellbeing and growth of each individual, as well as the welfare of the entire school community, are fundamental considerations regarding the management of students. The nature of the students at the school may impact their understanding of rules, appropriate conduct and the understanding of consequences.

1. Introduction

At Mater Dei, student management practices focus on developing skills of self-discipline, including responsibility and accountability. Central to this policy / procedure are the school values of Love of Christ and Neighbour and Community. The lesson expressed in the Good Samaritan parable, the empowerment of others, underpins the promotion of personal growth and self-esteem for all at Mater Dei School. Students are encouraged to learn from the choices they make and grow as a result.

Mater Dei School expressly prohibits corporal punishment as a means of discipline for its students. Both explicitly and implicitly, it does not sanction corporal punishment by any person, including parents and caregivers, to enforce discipline at school.

The Positive Behaviour Intervention and Support (PBIS) framework at Mater Dei School affirms and rewards positive behaviours and provides consequences for behaviours which have a negative impact on the individual student/s, others in the community or in the environment.

1.1 Purpose / Scope

The purpose of this policy / procedure is to provide a guideline on how to deal with behaviour management and includes but not limited to:

- Student management requires a consistent whole school approach, involving all members of the community and the continued commitment to partnership between parents, students and staff
- Student management at Mater Dei School may require the inclusion of specific behaviour management strategies for students with a mild to moderate intellectual disability
- A commitment to the Positive Behaviour Intervention and Support framework
- Everyone within the school community having the basic right to procedural fairness specifically including the hearing rule and the right to and unbiased decision
- A commitment to students' rights and responsibilities (see below)
- The school's commitment to excellence as a provider of education for students with a disability
- Compassion and forgiveness, including restorative practices where students can grow and learn from their mistakes
- Promotion of the dignity and responsibility of each person whilst ensuring the respect for the rights of all members of the school community
- A commitment to address issues that affect the learning environment at the school and behaviour that interrupts the learning of others.

Mater Dei School is required by government regulation to publicly disclose the consequences for serious breaches in relation to student conduct. In a special school where challenging behaviour is linked to a child's disability, expressive communication abilities and receptive understanding, graded disciplinary penalties are inappropriate. These student factors also make it difficult to determine 'power' relationships between students and groups of students. Challenging behaviours (including behaviours that cause harm to others) will be considered on an individual student basis in the context of the setting and the cognitive and social and emotional capacity of the student(s) involved

2. Responsibilities

2.1 Staff Responsibilities

All staff are required to always act as positive role models for students. Therefore, staff are required to:

- Treat students with dignity, equity and justice
- Be positive and proactive wherever possible
- invite, model and expect respect for self and others
- Actively promote, support and reward positive behaviour
- Minimise unnecessary confrontation when managing students
- Acknowledge, accept, and appreciate that students' individual needs may affect behaviour
- Allow for wait / thinking time when directing or correcting behaviour
- Seek appropriate support from people and / or procedures available within the school to ensure a consistent and comprehensive approach is achieved in behaviour management

2.2 Classroom Teacher Responsibilities

Classroom teachers are responsible for implementing consistent student management strategies within their classroom.

- Every classroom teacher at Mater Dei School has the responsibility to:
- Model appropriate behaviour which reflects the values of the school
- Establish guidelines and expectations of classroom behaviour which promotes and supports students within the behaviour expectations matrix
- Acknowledge and support positive work and behaviour of individual students, small groups of students and the whole class
- Adopt a communication style that is consistent, positive and relational for all students
- Differentiate for individual learning needs and styles by using a variety of teaching and learning strategies
- Provide positive feedback to students within a reasonable timeframe
- Deal with presenting behaviours as they occur minimising disruption to learning
- Apply appropriate consequences as outlined in the procedures of the Student Management Policy
- Allow for Binary Choice when dealing with student misbehaviour
- Be punctual to class
- Be prepared and organised for class

2.3 Student Rights and Responsibilities

Students are expected to:

- Participate in all lessons, masses and liturgies with levels of adjustments where necessary
- Cooperate with the expectations within the school's behaviour matrix
- Observe school rules
- Cooperate with all staff members
- Wear the school uniform correctly
- Behave appropriately when representing the school, including when participating in workplace learning, excursions, incursions and community-based instruction.

3. Student Management Policy and Procedures

Recognition of Students:

3.1 Rewards and Awards

School rewards and awards are a celebration and recognition of the efforts and commitment to learning of our students. Mater Dei School's awards and rewards are inspired by the words, examples and values of the Benedictine tradition. The school's rewards and awards reflect the belief that learning is a lifelong process for the students of Mater Dei.

Positive student behaviour and good choices are encouraged and recognised at Mater Dei by way of either:

- Informal feedback, e.g. Immediate verbal praise, incidental high-five gestures etc
- Informal tangible recognition, e.g. classroom reward charts, stickers and stamps

PROCEDURE:

Formal recognition of students' commitment to the Benedictine values of the school are acknowledged with the following awards:

3.2 Merit Award for Learning

These awards are given to students by teachers and contribute to bronze / silver / gold awards distributed at Principal's Assemblies and are tracked via Compass so there is no need to send in these awards. Students' Award tally are visible to staff and parents on Compass.

1. Initial 10 Merit Awards for Learning: Student is awarded a Bronze Award
2. Additional 10 Merit Awards for Learning: Student is awarded a Silver Award

3. Additional 10 Merit Awards for Learning: Student is awarded a Gold Award
4. Three (3) Gold Learning Awards: Student is awarded a Good Samaritan Medallion at the end of year assembly.

RECORDING OF AWARDS

These awards must be logged on to Compass by the staff member who has issued the award.

3.3 Communication of Awards

Parents /Guardians are notified via an SMS one week prior to the assembly, when a student is due to receive an award. If a student is absent, their award will be held over until the next assembly. The cut-off date to be counted towards Bronze / Silver / Gold Awards at a Principal's assembly is one week prior to the event.

3.4 Samaritan Award

These awards can be given to students by any staff member. The Samaritan Award acknowledges when a student is following the school rules of be kind, be safe and be a learner.

Students will be provided with a sticker stating what rule the award is for and staff will record the awards on compass. At the Principal's assembly the Infants, Primary and Secondary class with the highest tally overall will both be rewarded with a perpetual class trophy and the student from each stage with the most Samaritan Awards will receive an award.

3.5 St Benedict Award for Hospitality

St. Benedict sees Christ present within the community which we understand as everyone at Mater Dei. He accords special attention to Christ's unexpected arrival in the person of the visitor. Christ presents himself in the visitor's vulnerability and calls us to put aside individual plans and pre-occupations in order to let the unexpected person in, to help them get established and to respond to their most pressing needs. When the visitor comes to experience being "at home" in this new place, for however brief the stay, we discover a new awareness of the common journey in which all are engaged. A blessing accompanies both the offering and the receiving of hospitality. St Benedict writes in Chapter 53.1 "All guests who arrive should be received as Christ."

CRITERIA FOR THE AWARD:

- A Mater Dei School student who regularly offers hospitality
- One who sustains a spirit of welcome, responsibility and reliability in a consistent manner.
- One who is cheerful and who tries to cheer others especially when life is difficult.

Nominations for the Hospitality Award are to be received by the due date prior to St Benedict's Day celebrations. A Nomination is accompanied by a short explanation which addresses the criteria.

Nominations are considered by a sub-committee made up of representative from the Mater Dei organisation.

The Hospitality Award is distributed at the St Benedict's Day Mass and Celebration.

4. Major Disciplinary Sanctions

4.1 Suspension and Expulsion

The most serious level of consequence for behaviour is referred to as suspension from school and the discontinuation of enrolment.

Suspension is the temporary withdrawal of a student's right to attend school and/or school activities for a specified period of time.

Without limiting the circumstances in which this may happen, students may expect to be suspended where they:

- Persistently disobey staff;
- Are persistently insolent towards, or persistently harass or abuse staff or students;
- Persistently disrupt the learning and teaching of others;
- Persistently breach school policies, regulations and guidelines;
- Persistently disrupt sport and cocurricular activities by, for example, failing to follow the rules set down for those activities.

Expulsion is the permanent withdrawal of a student's right to attend Mater Dei School.

Without limiting the circumstances in which this may happen, students may expect to be expelled where:

- They have engaged in any of the misconduct which can lead to suspension and are unwilling or unable to meet the conditions for return to normal schooling;

- They have behaved in a way which seriously undermines the ethos of Mater Dei School;
- Their behaviour has put at risk the wellbeing of Mater Dei School, its staff, its students or any member of its community;
- They have sold or distributed illegal substances (including cigarettes, alcohol and illegal drugs);
- They have engaged in repeated breaches of Mater Dei School's;
- Their return to normal schooling is not in their best interest and/or in the best interest of the members of the School community;
- They have consistently and deliberately interfered with the educational opportunities and endeavours of other Mater Dei School students;
- They have engaged in conduct of a criminal nature.

Exclusion is the act of preventing a student's admission to a number of schools. This is not relevant in the context of Mater Dei School.

4.2 Responses to Serious Breaches of Student Behaviour

When a student has engaged in behaviour of a serious nature and the safety of the student and other staff/students is a major concern, the processes of expulsion, followed by exclusion may occur. The Principal is responsible for the expulsion and exclusion of students, always based on procedural fairness.

Where major disciplinary penalties are being considered, including suspension, the student and/or parents / caregivers will be informed, verbally in the first instance and then in writing, of the procedural steps to be followed in dealing with the matter.

- In relation to all matters to be investigated, students and parents will be informed of:
- The nature of the allegation / behaviour and given an opportunity to respond
- Informed as to who will investigate the allegation and make the decision on the penalty
- Informed of the procedures to be followed which will include an opportunity to have a parent/caregiver or support person present when responding to the allegations
- Afforded a right of review or appeal.

4.2 Procedure for Suspension

Suspension is the temporary withdrawal of a student's right to attend school and/or school activities for a specified period of time. Suspension would be applied bearing in mind the individual circumstances of the student.

Suspension would only be applied in the event that a student's behaviour is assessed as being a threat of substantial harm to them or others and the school required a short period of time to put significant strategies in place prior to it being safe for the student to return.

Thorough investigation always precedes any such action. Parents will normally be actively involved in the process unless the circumstances require urgent intervention. Counselling or specialist intervention may be a suggested outcome.

4.2 Procedure for Alternate Schooling Option or Expulsion

Consideration of an alternative schooling option would only be considered after reasonable adjustments/measures have been implemented to support the student and it has been decided that Mater Dei School cannot adequately cater for the student and/or maintain student / staff safety.

1. Where a disciplinary issue arises which may result in expulsion, the school will investigate the circumstances surrounding the issue. The investigation must occur within one (1) week of the issue being presented. The Deputy Principal may direct the student not to attend school while the investigation takes place. An investigation will include the student being provided with information about the nature of the allegations.
2. If after receiving the results of the investigation and hearing representations from the student, the Deputy Principal will make a recommendation to that effect to the Principal and advise the student and parents / carer that a recommendation has been made, in writing. The written recommendation will be communicated with parents within two (2) days of receipt of results.
3. The parents / caregiver or student may appeal against that recommendation to the Principal, setting out the reasons why the Principal should not act on the recommendation. Any appeal must be provided to the Principal no later than three (3) days after the parents / caregiver have been advised of the recommendation.

4. If no appeal is made within the time specified, the Principal will decide whether to accept the recommendation and advise, in writing, the student and parents / caregiver of the decision.
5. If the student or parents / caregiver have lodged an appeal, the Principal will consider the recommendations and the reasons provided by the student or parents / caregiver for not following the recommendation and will decide whether to accept the recommendation of the Deputy Principal. The Principal will then consult, where appropriate, the Mater Dei Board. The Principal will then advise, in writing, the student and parents / caregivers of the decision.
6. The decision made by the Principal will be final.

RECORD KEEPING

All records of serious breaches of student misbehaviour and subsequent consequences will be recorded in Compass – the school’s student management system.

5. Bullying

The National Safe School Framework (2011) defines bullying as repeated verbal, physical, social or psychological behaviour that is harmful and involves the misuse of power by an individual or group towards one or more persons.

Conflict between equals or single incidents are not identified as bullying. However, such incidents may require intervention by the school.

At Mater Dei School a proactive approach to behaviour and relationships between students is taken. This includes:

- Personal Development teaching and learning which develops and uses self-management skills that enable students to take personal responsibility for their actions and emotions and take positive action to protect and enhance the health, safety and wellbeing of others (PDHPE Syllabus)
- Clear statements based on the school rules of Be Kind Be Safe Be a Learner
- Teaching positive ways of resolving conflict
- Active supervision on playground areas including a high ratio of staff to student and the wearing of high-vis vests
- Provision of activities and areas where playground activities are structured and/or provide a quiet space for students

5.1 Dealing with Bullying at Mater Dei School

Bullying is viewed as a breach of the school's behaviour code. Any reports of bullying will be investigated, and appropriate action will be taken.

Students at Mater Dei School have a mild to moderate intellectual disability. Therefore, their understanding of their actions and the associated consequences may require alterations and/or adjustments to the procedure. However, all alterations and/or adjustments must be documented classroom teacher, including all of the students involved. The Leader of Wellbeing, with the support and assistance of the classroom teacher will:

1. Work with the person being bullied and follow these steps:

- Listen carefully and calmly, and document what the student tells you. (Clarify if there are immediate safety risks and let the student know how you will address these)
- Collect additional information
- Discuss a plan of action with the student.
- Inform the student what is intended to do.
- Provide suggestions and strategies on what to do if the bullying occurs again.
- Set a date for follow up review/s.
- Record the incident in Compass
- Contact the parent / caregiver informing them of the incident and the course of action.
- Provide daily supportive check-ins for several days
- Follow up with student/s involved over the next several weeks and months.

2. Work with the person bullying someone else and follow these steps:

- Interview the student taking a 'No Blame' approach
- Listen carefully and calmly, and document what the student tells you
- Communicate with the student about how the other student may feel when being bullied
- Provide suggestions on how to move forward
- Discuss disciplinary action and consequences for bullying behaviour
- Set a date for follow up review/s
- Record the incident in Compass
- Contact the parent / caregiver informing them of the incident and your course of action

- Provide daily supportive check-ins for several days
- Follow up with student/s over the next several weeks and months.

3. *Promote positive bystander behaviour to all students*

- Interview the student/s where necessary
- Listen carefully and calmly, and document what the student/s tells you
- Communicate with the student/s about how the other student may feel when being bullied and no one supporting them
- Provide suggestions and discuss how to handle a similar situation in the future
- Record the incident in Compass
- Where necessary, contact the parents / caregivers informing them of the incident and the course of action.
- Follow up with students over the next several weeks and months.

The Leader of Wellbeing informs the Deputy Principal and, where deemed necessary, the Principal of the situation.

Consequences could include:

- Loss of privilege eg: play, excursion
- Reflection activity including social story

The Leader of Wellbeing follows up and monitors the situation; sets review date and follow up interview.

Action:

- Either no further action; or
- Expression of concern with the student and parent / caregiver that he / she has not maintained his / her commitment to assisting the targeted student as was planned.
- Refer to the Deputy Principal.
- Clarify expectations and give the student further opportunity to demonstrate goodwill.
- Provide ongoing support for all students involved.

Consequences could include:

- Further interview and collaboration with parents – matter resolved
- Behaviour contract and monitoring of student
- Increase of level of frequency of communication with parent/s/caregiver

Action:

- Either no further action; or
- If no change in bullying behaviour and issues/concerns are continuing:
- Deputy Principal prepares report outlining above for Principal Consequences could include:
- Suspension
- Review of enrolment

At any point throughout the process, parents may contact the Principal to discuss their concerns

6. Definitions

Binary Choice

Binary choice allows students a choice in which there are only two alternatives in the decision making process.

Hearing Rule

The **hearing rule** is the right of the person who has had allegations made against them to:

- Know the specific allegations and any other information which will be taken into account when considering the matter
- Know the process for considering the matter
- Respond to the allegations
- Know how to seek a review of the decision made in response to the allegations.

Right to an unbiased decision:

The **right to an unbiased decision** is the right to:

- An impartial investigation and decision-making process
- An unbiased decision-maker.