
Introduction

Good Samaritan's approach to behaviour support is underpinned by the belief that all children should maintain a level of behaviour that respects their rights and the rights of others to:

- be safe and feel safe
- learn to the best of their ability
- express themselves
- take responsibility for their choices.

To this end, Good Samaritan commits to working in partnership with families, parents, carers and guardians and is guided by values of justice, equity, integrity, respect and compassion.

All children and staff have the right to be treated fairly and with dignity in an environment that is safe, and free from disruption, intimidation, harassment and discrimination.

Good Samaritan's child Behaviour Policy details related expectations and procedures for fulfilling the School's responsibilities in promoting positive child behaviour and responding to challenging child behaviour. There will, however, be cases of unacceptable behaviour where it will be in the best interests of the School community and/or the child involved for the child to be removed from the School for a period of time.

Context

Suspension occurs when a child's attendance at school is temporarily withdrawn, on the authority of the Principal or delegate, for a set period of time.

Suspension allows the parties involved to reflect on and enter into dialogue about the behaviour and circumstances that have led to the suspension, and to plan and/or review learning and behaviour supports to assist a child to engage positively with school and learning.

There are two forms of suspension:

1. Internal suspension

The child is excluded from the standard instruction or educational opportunities being provided to other children, but can still undertake educational activities on the School premises for the period of the suspension in the form of:

- In-school suspension: This occurs when the child may be present at school, but not participating in/attending scheduled classes or activities for a specified period of time.

Internal suspensions should focus on encouraging the child to exhibit more positive behaviours, to increase their level of participation and, where appropriate, to learn problem-solving and/or conflict resolution skills.

2. External (out-of-school) suspension

The child's right to attend school has been withdrawn for a defined period of time. Responsibility for the child's safety and welfare during this time is transferred to the parents/carers/guardians/relevant persons. The child is not to be on the School premises during the period of suspension.

An external suspension is designed to allow a period of time when the School, parents/carers/guardians/relevant persons and the child involved can work together on the resolution of the problem that has led to the child's suspension. This may include reviewing systems of support in place to mitigate risks.

In all suspension cases, Good Samaritan will ensure a continuation of educational opportunity by providing the child with meaningful work, and monitor the completion of that work, until the period of suspension concludes.

The enrolment agreement explicitly records at the time of acceptance of the enrolment of a child that unacceptable behaviour by a child may result in suspension or termination of the child's enrolment.

Procedures for suspension

Authority for suspension

Only the Good Samaritan Principal or their delegate has the authority to suspend a child from the School.

The Principal should be notified of the suspension as soon as practicable.

Good Samaritans Principal is responsible for ensuring all procedures associated with suspension are followed correctly.

Grounds for suspension

The Good Samaritan Principal or delegate has authority to suspend a child if the child:

- behaves in such a way as to pose a danger whether actual, perceived or threatened to the health, safety or wellbeing of any person
- causes significant damage to or destruction of property
- commits, attempts to commit or is knowingly involved in theft of property
- possesses, uses or sells, or deliberately assists another person to possess, use or sell illicit substances or weapons
- fails to comply with any clear and reasonable instruction of a staff member so as to pose a danger whether actual, perceived or threatened to the health, safety or wellbeing of any person
- consistently engages in behaviour that vilifies, defames, degrades or humiliates another person
- consistently behaves in an unproductive manner that interferes with the wellbeing, safety or educational opportunities of any other child.

Application

Suspension only applies if the child is engaged in the behaviour referred to above while at school, travelling to or from school, is identifiable as a member of the school community or while engaged in any school activity away from school (including travel to and from that activity).

Criminal offences

Some wrongful behaviours of a serious nature are by definition criminal offences. These may include criminal damage of property, possession of a weapon, theft, assault with weapons, use, possession or distribution of drugs. The grounds for suspension are indicative only and not exhaustive.

When a Principal determines that a serious criminal offence has occurred, they will be mindful of the School's and MACS' duty of care, including those owed to children who are victims or offenders, and staff.

The incident will be reported to the police at the earliest opportunity.

Process

1. Procedures for suspension

- 1.1 In determining whether a child should be suspended, the Good Samaritan Principal or delegate will ensure that suspending the child is appropriate to:
 - a) the behaviour for which the child has demonstrated
 - b) the educational needs of the child
 - c) any disability the child may have
 - d) the age of the child
 - e) the residential and social circumstances of the child.
- 1.2 The Good Samaritan Principal or delegate is required to notify the MACS Regional Office.
- 1.3 Before implementing a suspension, the Good Samaritan Principal or delegate will ensure that principles of procedural fairness are followed in the decision-making process, including that:
 - a) the principal has put to the child the allegations or reasons why the particular decision is under consideration
 - b) the child has had the opportunity to be heard
 - c) any information or documentation provided by the child or their parent/guardian/carer/relevant person has, where necessary and as soon as reasonably practicable, been taken into account in making the decision regarding suspension
 - d) other forms of action to address the behaviour for which the child is being suspended have been considered.
- 1.4 When providing procedural fairness to a child in accordance with paragraph 1.3, the principal will ensure that they do so in a manner which does not prejudice any relevant investigation on the request of Victoria Police.
- 1.5 Prior to an internal or external suspension taking effect, or on the day of implementing a suspension with immediate effect, the Good Samaritan Principal or delegate will:
 - a) identify the family/parent/guardian/carer/relevant person
 - b) give verbal notification to the child and notify the family/parent/guardian/carer/ relevant person via telephone or in person of the reason/s for the suspension, the School days on which the suspension shall occur and where the suspension will occur. This will be followed by notification in writing or email within 24 hours
 - c) provide contact details for additional support services to the child and their family/parent/guardian/carer/relevant person, as appropriate
 - d) provide meaningful school work when the child is to be suspended for three days or less
 - e) develop a *child Absence Learning Plan* and *Suspension of children – Return to School Plan*

when the child is to be suspended for more than three days

- f) provide the child and their family/parent/guardian/carer/relevant person with a *Notice of Suspension of children* which must include:
 - the reason/s for suspension
 - the School days on which the suspension shall occur
 - g) provide the child and their family/parent/guardian/carer/relevant person with copies of the *child Absence Learning Plan* and *Suspension of children – Return to School Plan* (if required).
- 1.6 The Good SamaritanPrincipal or delegate may implement a suspension with immediate effect if the child’s behaviour is such that they are putting the health, safety and wellbeing of themselves or any other person at significant risk.
- 1.7 Where the Good SamaritanPrincipal or delegate implements a suspension with immediate effect, the Principal may determine to expel the child while the child is on suspension.
- 1.8 Where the Good SamaritanPrincipal or delegate implements a suspension with immediate effect, the Principal or delegate will provide supervision of the child:
- a) until the child is collected by the family/parent/guardian/carer/relevant person or a person chosen as an emergency contact for the child
 - b) if the child is in out-of-home care or if the child cannot be collected by the parent, until the child is collected by an adult who is residing with and providing care to the child
 - c) until the end of the School day
 - d) in the case of a school camp or excursion, if paragraphs (a) or (b) do not apply, until the end of the camp or excursion.
- 1.9 Where requested, the School should provide access to counselling for the child and/or their family/parents/guardians/carers/relevant persons.

2. Period of suspension

- 2.1 The maximum continuous period of time a child can be suspended at any given time is five school days, unless a longer period is approved by the MACS Regional Office.
- 2.2 A child cannot be suspended for more than 15 school days in a school year without approval from the MACS Regional Office.
- 2.3 If a child is suspended for a period which is longer than the days left in the term, the Good SamaritanPrincipal will consider the likely disruption to the child’s learning before imposing a suspension that will continue into the following term.
- 2.4 If a child has been suspended for 15 school days in a school year, an expulsion is not an automatic consequence.

3. Return to school meeting

- 3.1 A return to school meeting will be conducted with the family/parents/guardians/carers/relevant persons before the child’s return to school. The child should be present.
- 3.2 The Good SamaritanPrincipal will inform the family/parents/guardians/carers/relevant persons who will be in attendance at the return to school meeting.
- 3.3 The family/parents/guardians/carers/relevant persons may request that a support person attend the return to school meeting with them. The support person may provide emotional support and reassurance. They are not an advocate. The support person’s details must be

provided to the Principal prior to the meeting.

3.4 The Good Samaritan Principal may decide to extend the suspension if the return to school meeting does not meet the desired outcomes.

4. Record keeping

4.1 The Good Samaritan Principal is responsible for ensuring all records pertaining to any incident involving a suspension are carefully recorded, filed and retained on the School records, including information on the number, reasons and frequency of suspensions pertaining to the child in order to be able to track the occurrence and nature of suspensions at any point in time.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

- [Checklist for Suspension of children](#)
- [Flowchart for Suspension of children](#)
- [Notice of Suspension of children](#)
- [Return to School Plan – Suspension of children](#)

Responsible director	Director, Learning and Regional Services
Policy owner	General Manager, child Wellbeing
Approving body/individual	MACS Board
Risk Rating	High
Approval date	April 2022
Date of next review	April 2024

POLICY DATABASE INFORMATION	
Assigned Framework	Suspension, Negotiated Transfer and Expulsion of children
Related documents	Checklist for Suspension of children Expulsion of children Policy (School) Flowchart – Suspension of children Negotiated Transfer of children Policy (School) Notice – Suspension of children Return to school plan – Suspension of children Roles, responsibilities and reporting – Suspension, negotiated transfer and expulsion of children
Superseded documents	School Suspension of children Policy – v1.0 - 2021
New policy	