

## Purpose

The Aquinas College Student Behaviour Policy reflects the school community's shared expectations in relation to student engagement, attendance and behaviour. This Policy sets out the clear processes to be followed in order to support students' behavioural, educational and emotional engagement.

This Policy provides an overview of how Aquinas College will:

- promote positive behaviour in the College community
- seek to prevent behavioural issues
- respond to challenging student behaviour occurring at school, at a school activity away from the College grounds or while travelling to or from school or a school activity.

This Policy should be read in conjunction with all College policies and the [CECV Positive Behaviour Guidelines 2018](#).

## College Profile

### About Aquinas College

Aquinas College was established on 8 February 1961. The College was administered by the Christian Brothers at the request of the founding parish priests, opening the doors to welcome 130 boys in Forms 1 and 2. Aquinas Girls' College was established in February 1967 with different Orders of Religious Sisters supporting the College. At the beginning of 1979 the Boys' and Girls' Colleges amalgamated and became known as Aquinas College under lay administration. It incorporated the structure of three sub-schools; Junior Girls and Boys (Years 7-10) and Senior co-educational (Years 11-12) with an overall student population of approximately 1400.

Since then, the College has served the greater Ringwood community, educating boys and girls from Years 7 to 12. The College has a student population of approximately 1750 students and offers a range of educational programmes. Aquinas College is proud of its accreditation with the Council of International Schools (CIS) and our strong international focus. Students are encouraged to see themselves as global citizens with the capability to see the world from multiple perspectives. Aquinas College is a committed and active Catholic community. Embracing the ideals of St Thomas Aquinas, as well as the charisms of our team patrons: St Dominic, St Mary of the Cross MacKillop and Blessed Edmund Rice, our staff and students strive for wisdom and inspiration.

Aquinas College is committed to providing equitable access and opportunity for all. The College considers that awareness of, recognition, and responsiveness to the needs and rights of all individuals are essential to embrace human dignity. Inclusive practices welcome and celebrate diversity, invite belonging and provide opportunities for participation and achievement of appropriate learning outcomes.

Foundational to our work with students, families and the school community is the building of genuine, authentic relationships. The development and promotion of high-quality relationships are responsibilities shared by all members of the school community. All teachers, students, families, parishes and the wider community contribute to fostering life-affirming relationships that recognise and support the inherent dignity of each person.

## Rationale Aquinas College

At Aquinas College we strive to provide an inclusive education which values diversity and celebrates difference. Diversity is enacted through a pedagogy of inclusion and a commitment to uphold the rights of all to be welcomed, valued, acknowledged and actively engaged in education. Our learning community is committed to processes that support all students to make optimal progress and respect the rights of all students to learn in a positive and supportive environment. We seek to provide successful participation and to intervene as early as possible when students are not actively engaged in learning. Student behaviour is linked to the quality of the learning experiences. Purposeful, authentic, and relevant learning experiences that are of a sufficiently challenging yet achievable standard maximise positive behaviour.

## Vision

Inspired by Gospel values and mindful of our Catholic identity, our Vision is to ignite the fire of learning and shine as a beacon of excellence, hope and love in the world.

'Illuminare et Ardere'

## Mission

Our Mission is to promote quality education while developing an awareness of God in our lives, the value and connectedness of all human relationships, a sense of justice, a hopeful spirit and a love of learning.

We proclaim this Mission at Aquinas College by embracing six Core Values:

**Spirituality:** we nurture a connectedness to God and a Catholic faith that is informed by scripture, tradition and the regional parish communities.

**Belonging:** mindful of our diverse local and global community; we are culturally inclusive and respect the dignity of each individual.

**Perseverance:** we are challenged to continually strive for excellence in all aspects of our learning.

**Compassion:** we promote the service of others through education and experiences that are based on kindness and generosity informed by Catholic Social Teaching.

**Stewardship:** we encourage our community to respond to the need for sustainability in our contemporary world in the light of the Gospel and its call to action.

**Justice:** we promote opportunity and equity through awareness and support of the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights.

## Aims

Our College is a community that exemplifies the gospel values of love, forgiveness, justice and truth. Our school community recognises that everyone has the right to be respected, to feel safe and be safe and, in turn, our school community acknowledges each member's own obligation to behave responsibly. This Policy is intended to guide our College's actions. It has been developed in consultation with the school community and seeks to prioritise respectful relationships and safety in response to the rights and needs of all members of the school community. A safe and supportive environment respects the rights of all students to learn, the rights of all teachers to teach and the rights of all members of the school community to be safe.

Every person at the College has a right to feel safe, to be happy and to learn. Therefore our College aims:

- to promote the values of honesty, fairness and respect for others
- to acknowledge the worth of all members of the community and their right to work and learn in a positive environment
- to maintain good order and harmony
- to affirm cooperation as well as responsible independence in learning
- to foster self-discipline and to develop responsibility for one's own behaviour.

## Guiding Principles

Aquinas College strives to build a safe and positive school environment that is guided by Gospel values and honours the dignity of the individual, the family and the College.

The development and promotion of high-quality relationships are responsibilities shared by all members of the school community. Teachers, students, families, parish members and the wider community contribute to and share in the responsibility to foster life-affirming relationships that recognise and support the inherent dignity and safety of each person. All members of the school community are expected to contribute to the mission and vision of the College and to understand their rights and acknowledge their obligation to behave responsibly.

As a provider of Catholic education, the College Principal will take into account the need for the school community to represent and conform with the doctrines, beliefs and principles of the Catholic faith when making decisions regarding matters of College administration, including enrollment. Pupils and families who are members of other faiths are warmly welcomed at our College. However, the College reserves its right to exercise its administrative discretion in appropriate circumstances, where it is necessary to do so to avoid injury to the religious sensitivities of the Catholic school community.

It is vitally important that the College is made fully aware of each child's individual circumstances insofar as these may impact upon his or her physical, functional, emotional or educational needs, particularly where the College is required to provide additional support to the child.

## Definitions

- Behaviour is defined as the way in which one acts or conducts oneself, especially towards others. In general terms, it can be considered to be anything we say or do.
- Appropriate behaviour is behaving in a manner that is suitable for a public gathering, respecting the other members of the forum (class, meeting, assembly, gathering) and treating others as you would wish to be treated. Members are encouraged to take responsibility for their actions and to show mutual respect, maturity, and common sense. In general, appropriate behaviour is any behaviour that contributes to the positive learning environment and aligns with our College rules, codes of conduct and behavioural expectations.
- Inappropriate behaviour or unacceptable behaviour (including bullying, harassment and victimisation), may involve actions, words or physical gestures that could reasonably be perceived to be the cause of another person's distress or discomfort. Unacceptable behaviour does not have to be face-to-face, and may take many forms such as gestures, written, telephone or e-mail communications or through social media.

- Discriminatory conduct is conduct whereby an individual is treated less favourably on the basis of a relevant attribute, including their sex, race, sexual orientation, age, disability, religion, physical appearance or belief or gender reassignment. Such action may constitute discriminatory conduct that is contrary to Commonwealth and Victorian anti-discrimination legislation.
- Bullying is a broad concept which may generally be characterised as offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour, an abuse or misuse of power through means that undermine, humiliate, denigrate or injure the recipient. Bullying generally involves a series or pattern of events in which one individual has demonstrated unacceptable behaviour towards another individual. Please refer to the Aquinas College [A Safe School](#) statement for further details.
- Challenging behaviour is behaviour that significantly challenges the day to day functioning of the College. The behaviour impacts on learning and interrupts students' and staff capacity to feel safe or function in a safe and orderly environment.
- At Risk behaviour is any behaviour that has the potential to cause harm or injury to self or other. This includes physical, emotional or psychological harm.
- Criminal offences refers to forms of unacceptable behaviour that may be serious enough to constitute a criminal offence. If Aquinas College becomes aware that an offence has been or may have been committed, these concerns will be reported to the police or other authorities, as appropriate.

## Legislative Context

The *Education Training and Reform Regulations 2017* (Vic.) (sch 4 cl 12) outlines the College's obligations to ensure the care, safety and welfare of all students attending the College. In discharging its duty of care responsibilities, the College and teaching staff must exercise professional judgment to achieve a balance between ensuring that students do not face an unreasonable risk of harm and encouraging students' independence and maximising learning opportunities. Non-teaching staff, volunteers and external providers must exercise judgment appropriate in the circumstances. The College must also comply with legislation related to Occupational Health and Safety for staff.

This document is informed by relevant Australian and Victorian legislation including:

- *Education and Training Reform Act 2006* (Vic.)
- *Education and Training Reform Regulations 2017* (Vic.)
- *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* (Cth)
- *Disability Standards for Education 2005* (Cth)
- *Equal Opportunity Act 2010* (Vic.)
- *Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004* (Vic.).

This document should be read in combination with the CECV Positive Behaviour Guidelines 2018 and is also informed by the following resources:

- Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority (VRQA) policy requirements
- National Safe Schools Framework  
<http://www.education.gov.au/national-safe-schools-framework-0>
- Excel: Wellbeing for Learning in Catholic School Communities
- Health Promoting Schools Framework [www.ahpsa.org.au](http://www.ahpsa.org.au)
- CECV Intervention Framework 2015  
[www.cecv.catholic.edu.au/publications/CECV-Intervention-Framework.pdf](http://www.cecv.catholic.edu.au/publications/CECV-Intervention-Framework.pdf)
- Diocesan policy and regulations
- [CECV Safe and Sound Practice Guidelines](#)

## Shared Behaviour Expectations

The College recognises the importance of providing clear guidance and expectations which are applicable to all members of the school community.

The table below sets out the College's expectations for its students, parents and staff.

Students are expected to:	Parents/Carers are expected to:	Principals/Teachers & Staff will:
1. take responsibility for their learning and have high expectations in themselves that they can learn	1. have high expectations of their child's behaviour, understand and support the implementation of the College's behavioural expectations	1. promote positive reinforcement and enhance student self-esteem by having a planned approach for recognising and responding to appropriate behaviour
2. model the College's core values of respect, endeavour, communication, trust and teamwork	2. openly communicate with the College in regard to their child's circumstances	2. deliver an inclusive and comprehensive curriculum which promotes positive behaviours and emphasises the well-being of every child focusing on pro-social behaviours
3. take responsibility for their own behaviour and the impact of their behaviour on others	3. cooperate with the College by assisting in the development and enforcement of strategies to address individual needs	3. employ whole school and classroom practices to establish a climate in which appropriate behaviour is the norm for all students and focus on the implementation of preventative and early intervention strategies to deal with attendance and behavioural issues
4. comply with this Policy and work with teachers and parents in developing strategies to improve outcomes to: a) obey all reasonable requests of staff b) respect the rights of others to be safe and learn	4. provide complete, accurate and up to date information when completing an enrolment form and supply the College, prior to and during the course of enrolment, with any additional information as may be requested, including copies of documents such as	4. consistently apply this Policy through a shared collegiate understanding and only exclude students in extreme circumstances

c) respect the property of others.	medical/specialist reports (where relevant to the child's schooling), reports from previous schools, court orders or parenting agreements	
	5. comply with the College's behaviour aims and the College's Code of Conduct and to support the College in upholding prescribed standards of dress, appearance and behaviour, in accordance with the terms of your child's enrolment at the College.	5. plan for the professional development needs of all staff to enable them to develop and maintain positive relationships with their students
	6. acknowledge and understand that unacceptable behaviour by a child, or repeated behaviour by a parent or guardian that, in the College's view, is unacceptable and damaging to the partnership between parent/guardian and the College, may result in suspension or termination of the child's enrolment.	6. recognise that for some students additional support may be needed in the form of staged responses and staff are committed to working with families to reintegrate students in an educational setting after exclusion

## Attendance Expectations

Ensuring that students attend school each day is a legal requirement. It is also a shared expectation of all students, parents and the wider school community, focusing on positive and pro-social behaviours together with prevention and early intervention.

The College recognises the importance of providing clear guidance on student attendance that is applicable to all members of the school community.

Full details on attendance, expectations to promote attendance, and attendance/absence procedures are set out in the College's **Attendance Policy** and associated Department of Education and Training [School attendance guidelines](#).

## School Actions and Consequences

Student engagement, regular attendance and positive behaviours will be supported through relationship based whole-school practices, as well as targeted and individualised support when required. Effective student behaviour change and student behaviour support is enhanced through

internally-based school support structures, and externally-based family, education, community and interagency partnerships. The College will apply a range of supports and measures to address inappropriate student behaviour. Where a student acts in breach of the behaviour standards of our school community, the College will institute a staged response, in accordance with the [CECV Positive Behaviour Guidelines 2018](#). Where applicable, an incident report will be completed and provided to the Principal or relevant staff member noting the templates provided in the CECV Positive Behaviour Guidelines

## **Positive reinforcement of appropriate behaviour**

Aquinas College will implement culturally inclusive strategies to reinforce appropriate behaviour which may include verbal recognition, individual or class rewards, communication with parents/wider school community, as appropriate.

### **Tier 1: School-wide supports**

Aquinas College implements culturally inclusive, school-wide preventative and early intervention strategies and practices for all its students to support positive behaviours, including:

- establishing predictable, fair and democratic classrooms and school environments
- providing physical environments that are conducive to positive behaviours and effective engagement in learning
- ensuring student participation in the development and implementation of whole school expectations
- empowering students by creating opportunities to take responsibility and be involved in decision making
- Enhancing student voice
- monitoring attendance and academic progress of students with the view to recognising students at risk and intervening early
- developing Personalised Learning Plans (PLP) in consultation with the Program Support Group (PSG) where appropriate for individual students

### **Tier 2: Targeted supports**

In addition to Tier 1 supports, some students may require targeted support or interventions to meet behavioural standards, including regular attendance. These students will be supported through a culturally appropriate staged response, including:

- understanding the student's background and needs
- ensuring a clear understanding of expectations by both students and teachers
- providing consistent school and classroom environments
- scaffolding the student's learning program
- data collection and documentation of incidents relating to the management of student behaviours to inform decision making
- revision of the Personalised Learning Plan (PLP) and creation of a Behaviour support Plan (BSP) or Attendance Maximisation Plan (AMP) as appropriate
- parent consultation via phone, videoconference or interview
- the Design and Implementation of support strategies that assist the student to self-calm such a quiet space or designated alternative area that they can go to if they are feeling overwhelmed
- case conference with specialist providers or MACS consultants (this may include Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander or EAL/New Arrival/Refugee Learning Consultants where culturally appropriate).

### **Tier 3: Intensive intervention**

When Tier 1 and Tier 2 systems are in place, the foundation for implementing Tier 3 supports is established. Complex behaviours are targeted to remediate and prevent further escalations. Support provided to students at Aquinas College will be aligned directly with the goals and targets set out in the students' Personalised Learning Plan (PLP), Behaviour Support Plan (BSP) and Student Safety Plan. Data systems provide school personnel with accurate, timely and practical information for making decisions about the fidelity and impact of individualised interventions that:

- value the student and support positive interaction
- have a clear data-informed strategy focused on preventing the occurrence of an identified behaviour by avoiding or adapting the circumstances that usually trigger this behaviour
- focus on building skills and developing alternative preferred behaviours
- consider the motivation for or functions of behaviours
- use the student's strengths and interests to increase success.

Aquinas College will implement more intensive intervention strategies for students presenting with complex and ongoing difficulties or extended school refusal. Development of plans will require support from parents/carers and will often require consent to access specialised services.

Aquinas College will support students with complex behaviours of concern through a culturally appropriate staged response which will generally include:

- ongoing implementation of universal and Tier 2 strategies
- use of data to inform and monitor the implementation of evidence-based interventions
- regular Program Support Group meetings to review PLP, BSP, safety plans and/or Attendance Maximisation Plans
- consultations with mutually agreed specialised support services
- implementation of explicit, data informed strategies designed to support the student to display safe behaviours. The design of the individualised support will be informed by the identified function of the behaviour and the explicit teaching of skills and desired behaviours.

### **Consequences for student misbehaviour**

Aquinas College adopts a staged response to challenging behaviour and appropriate reinforcement of appropriate behaviour noting that an effective Behaviour Support Plan (BSP) is developed to support the student in learning skills required for positive social interaction, along with the ability to become a more effective and successful learner. Consequences for misbehaviour are also implemented which may take the form of:

- non-verbal warning – e.g. eye contact / hand movement / shake of head / teacher positioning to stand near misbehaving student(s)
- verbal warning which identifies the misbehaviour and gives student the opportunity to change his/her behaviour
- moving student in the room to a less disrupting situation
- separating student from the class for a short period of time to provide an opportunity for the student to settle
- readmission to class activity based on student being de-escalated
- student required to stay in after class for set period of time
- student required to complete work during recess / lunchtime
- student engaged in restorative actions supervised by classroom teacher
- student re-entry meeting.



When concerns arise about a student's on-going behaviour or when a student is displaying chronic patterns of problem behaviour, Aquinas College will implement a targeted response to identify and address the presenting issues and reinforce replacement behaviours. This may involve the following support strategies:

- convening a Program Support Group (PSG) meeting involving parents/carers/Learning Diversity/Wellbeing coordinator and the student where appropriate.
- developing/Revising a Personalised Learning Plan (PLP) or attendance plan
- development/Revision of a Behaviour Support Plan (BSP) and/or Safety Plan where appropriate for individual students
- referral to Catholic Education or external Health or Allied Health providers
- consultation with external professionals, paediatrician, psychologist specialist practitioner
- contact with the Regional/Diocesan Office.

Disciplinary measures may be used as part of a staged response to challenging behaviour in combination with other engagement and support strategies to address the range of factors that may have contributed to the student's behaviour. Measures should always be proportional to the nature of the behaviour, and are best used with support measures to identify and address causes of the behaviour and implementation of strategies to limit recurrence of inappropriate behaviour. Supportive actions and any disciplinary measures will be implemented in accordance with the CECV Positive Support Guidelines 2018 and may include:

- review of Behaviour Support and Safety Plans with specialised support
- restorative practice
- withdrawal of privileges
- withdrawal from class activities for a specified period. Where appropriate, parents/carers will be informed of such withdrawals
- detention
- withdrawal from class if a student's behaviour significantly interferes with the rights of other students to learn or the capacity of a teacher to teach a class. In situations where the student is not able to comply with the instruction to relocate, the class (all other students) will be relocated/evacuated. The student may be temporarily isolated from regular classroom activities to provide an opportunity to de-escalate or for a specified period of time. Parents/carers should be informed of such withdrawals.
- in circumstances where the student is unable to calm, remains in a heightened state of anxiety or is a danger to self or others, the parents will be asked to take the student home for the remainder of the school day.
- contracts for conduct/attendance/bullying
- suspension (in-school and out of school)
- negotiated Transfer
- expulsion
- referral to police, DHHS, emergency service or appropriate agency.

A student may be excluded from school in situations where all other measures have been implemented without success, or where an immediate suspension is the only appropriate course of action in response to the student's behaviour which may put the health, safety and well-being of other students, staff or themselves at significant risk or where actions require reporting to police or appropriate agencies.

If other strategies are unsuccessful in modifying student behaviour, the College will follow the Melbourne Archdiocese Pastoral Care Policies regarding suspension, negotiated transfer and expulsion.

## Corporal punishment

The use of corporal punishment is expressly prohibited at Aquinas College and under the *Education and Training Reform Act 2006* (Vic).

## Consultation

As every child's educational needs can change over time, it will often be necessary for the College to review any additional assistance that is being provided to the child, in consultation with parents/guardians and the child's treating medical/allied health professionals, in order to assess:

- whether the additional assistance remains necessary and/or appropriate to the child's needs
- whether the additional assistance is having the anticipated positive effect on the child's individual physical, functional, emotional or educational goals
- whether additional specialised assistance is required
- whether it remains within the College's ability to continue to provide the additional assistance, given any limitations that may exist.

## Restraint and Seclusion

Aquinas College will undertake actions to prevent the need for the use of restraint or seclusion in accord with the CECV Positive Behaviour Guidelines 2018.

In alignment with the CECV Positive Behaviour Guidelines 2018

**Physical restraint** is defined as the use of force to prevent, restrict or subdue the movement of a student's body or part of their body where the student is not free to move away. Restraint does not include 'protective physical interventions', which involve physical contact to block, deflect or redirect a student's actions, or disengage from a student's grip.

Student restraint must be avoided, however, in order to ensure safety, it may only be used when certain conditions are met, and that appropriate standards and procedures are followed.

### When physical restraint or seclusion should not be used

Physical restraint and seclusion should not be used unless immediately required to protect the safety of the student or any other person. Restraint and seclusion must not be included in a Behaviour Support Plan or be used as a routine behaviour management technique, to punish or discipline a student or to respond to:

- a student's refusal to comply with a direction, unless that refusal to comply creates an imminent risk to the safety of the student or another person
- a student leaving the classroom/school without permission, unless that conduct causes an imminent risk to the safety of the student or another person
- verbal threats of harm from a student, except where there is a reasonable belief that the threat will be immediately enacted
- property destruction caused by the student unless that destruction is placing any person at immediate risk of harm

### Types of physical restraint which must not be used include:

- any restraint which covers the student's mouth or nose, and in any way restricts breathing
- the application of pressure to a student's neck, chest, abdomen, joints or pressure points to cause pain or which involves the hyperextension of joints
- holding a student's head forward, headlocks, choke holds

- take-downs which allow students to free-fall to the ground whether or not in a prone or supine position or otherwise
- wrestling holds (including 'full or half nelsons'), using a hog-tied position or straddling any part of a student's body
- basket holds, bear hugs, 'therapeutic holding'

#### **When physical restraint or seclusion may be used**

School staff may only use physical restraint on a student when there is an imminent threat of physical harm or danger to the student or others; and where such action (i.e. to physically restrain or seclude) would be considered reasonable in all the circumstances and there is no less restrictive means of responding in the circumstances.

As with physical restraint, seclusion should only be used when it is immediately required to protect the safety of the student or any other person. The decision about whether to use physical restraint or seclusion rests with the professional judgment of the staff member/s involved, who will need to take into account both their duty of care to their students, their right to protect themselves from harm and obligations under the Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006.

#### **Mechanical and chemical restraint**

Mechanical restraints should never be used in schools to restrict a student's freedom of movement, unless the device is for a therapeutic purpose with written evidence of the prescription/recommendation, or if required to travel safely in a vehicle. Medication primarily used to control or subdue behaviour, and which is not being used to treat an underlying physical or mental illness or a physical condition should never be used in schools.

#### **During Restraint**

If applying physical restraint in the limited circumstances set out above, staff must:

- use the minimum force required to avoid the dangerous behaviour or risk of harm
- only restrain the student for the minimum duration required and stop restraining the student once the danger has passed

Staff should ensure the type of restraint used is consistent with a student's individual needs and circumstances, including:

- the age/size of the student
- gender of the student
- any impairment of the student e.g. physical, intellectual, neurological, behavioural, sensory (visual or hearing), or communication
- any mental or psychological conditions of the student, including any experience of trauma
- any other medical conditions of the student
- the likely response of the student
- the environment in which the restraint is taking place

Staff should monitor the student for any indicators or distress. Staff should talk to the student throughout the incident, making it clear to the student why the physical restraint is being applied. Staff should also calmly explain that the physical restraint will stop once it is no longer necessary to protect the student and/or others.

### **Actions after restraint has been used**

Action: Reporting of the physical restraint/seclusion

Description: The staff member(s) involved in the incident must immediately notify the principal of the incident. A staff member should contact the student's parents and provide them with details of the incident as soon as possible. The incident may also need to be reported to EduSafe and WorkSafe (refer to the section headed 'WorkSafe notifiable incidents') where it involves harm or risk of harm to a staff member or other person.

### **Negotiated Transfer**

Negotiated transfer involves a change of school by a student either between Catholic systemic schools, or to a school within another sector, or to an alternative educational setting. In the case of students who are of post-compulsory school age, a wider range of options might be considered, for example, a negotiated transfer, either temporary or permanent, to the workforce, or to a higher education or training institute. The Deputy Principal - Students in consultation with the Principal, has the delegated authority to approve a negotiated transfer. Negotiated transfer is an option in circumstances in which it is judged that the student's present school is not the right environment for the student, and that another setting may better meet the student's current and future wellbeing and learning needs. It may also be that, due to serious behavioural issues, a student's negotiated transfer is an appropriate means of providing for the safety and wellbeing of the College community.

**Seclusion** is the solitary confinement of a person in a room or area from which their exit is prevented by a barrier or another person. Seclusion includes situations where a person is left alone in a room or area and reasonably believes they cannot leave that room or area even if they may physically be able to (e.g. the door is not locked). In extreme circumstances, e.g. in response to behaviours that cause harm to self or others, teachers will respond by exiting the other students from the learning space to ensure their safety. Where the student continues to display threatening and dangerous behaviour (e.g. wielding a bat), staff will seek to limit harm to others by isolating the student for the minimum amount of time required for the student to calm. Seclusion does not include the use of a safe place, time out or chill out rooms, being conditions that are set up to support the student and often included in Behaviour Support Plans.

If a student is placed in a separate room as a means of seclusion, staff will maintain appropriate supervision of the student.

Whilst Aquinas College acknowledges that prevention is the best strategy, there are limited circumstances in which restraint or seclusion may be deemed appropriate. In making a decision to implement any form of restraint or seclusion, Aquinas College staff are aware that their actions may directly increase the risk of injury and trauma, both for the student and for the staff member themselves. Such decisions are usually required to be made in times of high stress. Actions that may be considered reasonable will be made by staff present and will depend on the individual circumstances of each case as a matter of professional judgment.

The use of restraint or seclusion does not form part of any of Aquinas College's Behaviour Support Plans or Student Safety Plan. Restraint and seclusion will only be used in limited emergency situations, as outlined below.

1. The student's behaviour poses an imminent threat of physical harm or danger.
2. The action is reasonable in all the circumstances.
3. There are no less restrictive means of responding in the circumstances.

In the event that restraint or seclusion is used, the least restrictive form of restraint/seclusion will be used for the minimum time possible. The restraint/seclusion will cease as soon as the immediate danger for the student or others is averted.

The clear priority when managing such an incident will be the safety of all concerned. Aquinas College's staff involved in an incident of restraint or seclusion will immediately notify the principal and provide for the immediate care and safety of those concerned. The student's parents will be contacted. A post incident evaluation and report will be completed in accord with the templates and processes outlined in the CECV Positive Behaviour Guidelines 2018.

## Assessing and Mitigating Risk

To assist the College to discharge its safety responsibilities, Aquinas College will adhere to an Occupational Health & Safety Program through which potential safety hazards are identified and analysed in terms of the likelihood of an event occurring, and the potential consequences if the event was to occur. A similar risk based approach is taken with respect to Student Duty of Care, with the definitions of likelihood and consequences. Aquinas College will refer to CECV publications and may engage the services of the Catholic Education Office for the purpose of assessing student safety risks and determining how best to support the needs of the students, staff and broader community.

It is important that all staff consistently enforce school rules and safety policies, and actively engage in ensuring the physical and emotional wellbeing of students.

References:

- CECV Positive Behaviour Guidelines 2018 – Templates
- Behaviour Support Template
- Student Safety Plan Template (A&B)
- Record of Restraint and Seclusion
- Post Incident Checklist for Principals
- Risk Assessment Tool
- Diocesan policy and regulations
- CECV Safe and Sound Practice Guidelines

## Appendix 1 – General Information relating to disciplinary measures

- **Withdrawing privileges** – Aquinas College can withdraw student privileges as a consequence of breaching classroom or school behavioural standards. Aquinas College notes that the specific privileges withdrawn may vary between students based on the individual student's support plan, however they may include things such as representing the College at inter-school sports or attendance at a school event. This must be time-limited and the risk to the student's engagement should be taken into account. The student must be told why privileges are withdrawn, and how they should behave for privileges to be reinstated.
- **Withdrawal from class** – If a student's behaviour significantly interferes with the rights of other students to learn or the capacity of a teacher to teach a class or where there is possibility of harm to others, that student may be temporarily removed from regular classroom activities. In more serious cases the student may be required to leave the classroom for a specified period of time. Schools have a duty of care to ensure that students are supervised at all times, including when they are removed from a class. Where appropriate, parents and carers will be informed of such withdrawals.

Withdrawal from class does not constitute formal school exclusion such as suspension (including in-school suspension) or expulsion.

- **Detention** – Detention is an appropriate response for a wide range of less serious classroom and school behaviour breaches. Detention can effectively reinforce to students the importance of maintaining appropriate behaviour standards.

During detention teachers may instruct a student to finish school work which has not been completed in regular classroom time as a result of the behaviour, new work or other duties. No more than half the time allocated for any recess may be used for this. Where students are required to undertake detention after school hours, the time should not exceed forty-five minutes.

Where the decision is made that an after-school detention is appropriate, the principal should ensure that parents or carers are informed at least one day before the detention. Where family circumstances are such that an after-school detention would create undue hardship, Aquinas College may choose to negotiate alternative disciplinary measures with the parent or carer. Examples include where students regularly supervise younger siblings in the absence of parents or carers. Schools are permitted to detain students but are encouraged to take into account family circumstances and negotiate with parents and carers as appropriate.

- **Suspension, Negotiated Transfer or Expulsion.** In some instances it may be appropriate to suspend or expel a student who consistently compromises the safety and order of the school in order to protect the learning environment for remaining students and continue with effective teaching.

Suspension and expulsion are serious disciplinary measures and are for when other measures have not produced a satisfactory response, or where there is a threat to another person and immediate action is required.

- **Suspension** occurs when a student's attendance at school has been temporarily withdrawn on the authority of the principal, 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 student to engage positively with school and learning.

- **Negotiated transfer** means a documented and mutually agreed move to another school is arranged. Negotiated transfer occurs when all other pastoral and discipline measures, including suspension, have failed to resolve an issue of serious inappropriate student behaviour. A negotiated transfer ends the enrolment agreement with the first school and requires an enrolment in another school, other educational setting or work.
- **Expulsion** – Expulsion involves the termination of the contract entered into at the time of the enrolment by the parent(s)/carer(s)/relevant person. Aquinas College's enrolment agreement explicitly records at the time of acceptance of the enrolment of a student that unacceptable behaviour by a child, or parent may result in suspension or termination of the child's enrolment. This act is reserved for extreme circumstances where it is in the best interests of all parties involved that the student exists the College.

Aquinas College will ensure that policies and processes associated with negotiated transfer, suspension and expulsion align with [Melbourne Archdiocese Catholic Schools Policy 2.26 Pastoral Care of Students](#).