



# Managing Aggressive Behaviour

## Introduction

St Joseph's Primary School seeks to provide and maintain a safe, open & friendly learning environment for all staff, students and parents. The school encourages close links with parents & the community and believe that students benefits when the relationship between home & school is a positive one.

The vast majority of students, parents & carers are keen to work with us and are supportive of the school. However, on rare occasions, a tiny minority of parents, carers & students have a negative attitude towards the school and may display aggression, verbal & or physical abuse towards staff.

The school expects all staff members to behave professionally in these difficult circumstances and attempt to defuse the situation where possible, seeking involvement where appropriate from other colleagues. However, all staff members have the legal right, under the Victorian Occupational Health & Safety Act 2004, to be provided with a safe workplace without fear of abuse & violence.

St Joseph's Primary School expects that students & parents behave in a respectful manner towards all staff members and has developed the following procedure outlining the steps that will be taken in the event of unacceptable behaviour.

## Scope

This procedure applies to all staff members, students, parents & carers associated with the school.

## Behaviour


Types of behaviour that are considered serious & unacceptable will not be tolerated. These include, but are not limited to the following:

- » Shouting at staff members either on in person or over the phone
- » Physical intimidation, eg... standing very close to staff members
- » The use of aggressive hand gestures
- » Threatening staff members
- » Writing derogatory or abuse comments about the school or staff member either in written or electronic form (ie... social media)
- » Swearing
- » Pushing
- » Hitting, slapping, punching, kicking
- » Spitting
- » Racial or sexist comments

Serious or unacceptable behaviour may result in the Police being informed of the incident.

## Procedure

1. If a student, parent or carer behaves in an unacceptable manner towards a member of staff the Principal or a member of the Leadership Team will assess the level of risk before deciding on a future course of action. (Refer to Appendix 1)
2. Where the behaviour is deemed to be unacceptable the Principal or a member of the Leadership Team will seek to resolve the situation through discussion and medication. This may include the Principal or a member of the Leadership Team meeting with the student, parent or carer to clarify the school's expectations and agreed strategies to manage future situations. (Refer to Appendix 2)

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3. If necessary, the school's complaints procedures will be followed.
4. Where all procedures have been exhausted and aggression or intimidation continues OR where there is an extreme act of violence then further action may be taken including banning the individual from school premises. This will involve communication with relevant Education Department personnel as well with the Police.
  - » Students will be suspended or expelled in accordance with Section 2.2.19 of the Education And Training Reform Act 2006
5. In some circumstances, the individual would be advised in writing by the Principal or a member of the Leadership Team that following the incident of unacceptable behaviour, a ban is being considered. They would then be given an opportunity to explain their actions, after which a decision would be made about imposing the ban.
  - » Prior to being banned the following steps will be taken:
    - a. The individual will be informed in writing of the ban, subject to review and consequences resulting in any breach of the ban.
    - b. Where an assault has resulted in the ban, a statement indicating that the Education department & Police have been informed of the incident.
    - c. Where appropriate arrangements for students being delivered to and collected from the school gate will be clarified.
6. If after a ban has been imposed, and the individual comes on to school premises, the Police would be called immediately. The Principal, in conjunction with relevant Education Department personnel may also consider making a court application to prevent this from happening.

### **Conclusion**

Students learn best when there is a positive partnership between home and school. Whilst every effort will be made to work with students, parents & carers this will only be possible where they behave in an respectful manner.

Unfortunately, where a student, parent or carers behaviour is disrespectful, unacceptable or serious it will not be possible to continue working with them and as a last resort, legal action may be considered.



## APPENDIX 1: RISK ASSESSMENT

In the event of a student, parent or carer is behaving in a disrespectful, inappropriate or serious manner, each situation will be considered individually by the Principal or a designated member of the Leadership Team.

The following consideration will be taken into account as a risk assessment, before deciding on the most appropriate course of action:

- Has the student, parent or carer been verbally aggressive, threatening or intimidating?
- Has the student, parent or carer been physically aggressive, threatening or intimidating?
- What evidence is there to support the support the above statements? Have witnesses been consulted?
- Does the student, parent or carer have a known history of aggression / violence?
- Do staff members & other students feel intimidated by the student, parent or carer behaviour?
- Has the student, parent or carer been persistently abusive to staff members & other pupils?
- Was the student, parent or carer provoked in anyway and does the student, parent or carer claim to have been provoked?
- How frequently have these behaviours occurred?
- Is there a (low – medium – high) risk that the behaviour will be repeated?

**Further Comments / Proposed Course of Action:**



## **APPENDIX 2: OPTIONS FOR FUTURE ACTION**

### **Inviting the parent to a meeting to discuss events**

When inviting a student, parent or carer to a meeting to discuss disrespectful, unacceptable or serious behaviour the following needs to be considered.

- » The safety and well-being of those attending such a meeting must be carefully considered. It is strongly recommended that staff member should be accompanied by at least one other colleague at any such meeting. Consideration should be given to the seating arrangements, and care taken to ensure exits cannot be blocked by a parent who could potentially become aggressive.
- » The main points of discussion and any agreed actions should be noted, and a follow-up letter sent to confirm the school's expectations and any agreed actions. Some students, parents & carers may covertly record meetings and then seek to use the information obtained to support their case, and therefore schools should state explicitly that information obtained without permission will not be permissible.

### **Clarifying acceptable behaviour**

- » This could be explained at a meeting, or by letter, however any verbal explanation should be followed by a written confirmation of the discussion and the standards of behaviour outlined.

### **Forming strategies to manage future situations of potential conflict**

- » It is sometimes possible to identify situations of potential conflict and to plan for these in a way that minimises potential risks. For example, where a student, parent or carer persistently engages in arguments with staff member in corridors, at the beginning or end of the school day, they could be informed that any discussions with school staff must be held by prior appointment.
- » Alternatively, the student, parent or carer may be asked not to approach the staff member, but should instead arrange to meet the Principal or a Member of the Leadership Team, who will deal with their concerns.
- » In more serious cases a further option may be to advise the student, parent or carer that in future their concerns should be dealt with by written communication. Any such arrangements should be confirmed in writing to the parent.
- » In more serious cases of actual or threatened aggression/violence, or persistent abuse/intimidation the Principal or a Member of the Leadership Team may need to consider whether it is safe for the student, parent or carer to continue to come onto the school site or enter the buildings.