

WARANARA SCHOOL: POLICY & PROCEDURES STATEMENT

STUDENT CONDUCT PROCESS

POLICY SCOPE: This policy applies to all Waranara School employees and volunteers working in a supervisory/support capacity with students.

POLICY APPLICATION: This policy will be used to help staff respond appropriately to challenging student behaviours, AND to assist them in developing a safe and mutually-respectful school environment.

POLICY OUTLINE

CONTEXT

Students who enrol at Waranara School may have mental health issues, disabilities, family conflict, trauma, domestic violence, and educational and socio-economic disadvantage. Engaging with peers and staff in Waranara School setting can subsequently be a challenge for some of these students, as they try to balance personal difficulties with the requirements of new social relationships and group dynamics. A clear student conduct process is important in this context, to provide both young people and staff at Waranara School with guidelines and boundaries about what constitutes respectful behaviour, interactions and relationships within the school. Further, in the interests of maintaining a safe school environment for all students, as well as supportive connections with these young people, it is also important that Waranara School has a consistent response to situations when boundaries are crossed. To facilitate this process effectively, the school's Student Conduct Process is underpinned by a restorative practices' framework and philosophy.

POLICY STATEMENT

In order to provide young people with the best possible opportunities for success within a safe environment, Waranara School uses a restorative practices' framework as their foundational approach to behaviour management. This ethos emphasises the importance of:

- Co-operative problem-solving structures directly navigated by parties involved in conflict;
- Consistent invitations/opportunities to take personal responsibility and to participate in developing restorative solutions;
- An emphasis on safety and fairness;
- "Teachable moments" and restorative opportunities arising from a young person's behavioural choices;
- Constructive rather than punitive consequences, i.e. external directives about behaviour will be 'reasonable, respectful, related, restorative and re-integrative';
- Encouraging young people to acknowledge injustice, and articulate agreements/intentions that promote personal accountability.
- Seven Restorative Practices, which form a foundation for effective reconciliation and restoration of relationships

In line with this, Waranara School will use an authoritative approach in implementing behaviour management protocols and processes. This approach is characterised by the high-level use of limit-setting and clear boundaries, coupled with an intensive emphasis on building supportive and nurturing relationships.

PURPOSE

The Student Conduct Process is designed to provide students and staff with clarity and consistency about Waranara School's expectations and boundaries related to behaviour. This information provides the operational foundation for how all activities are to be designed and undertaken within the school. The policy will guide all relationship

development and disciplinary processes, safety management activities, and supportive re-integrative strategies implemented with young people.

PRINCIPLES

Restorative practice principles and strengths-based ideas provide the foundation for this policy, with a companion emphasis on positive relationships between staff and students, mutual respect, empathy, self-awareness, accountability, and choice. In addition, providing young people with opportunities to learn about and build social capital are critical, alongside effective engagement, explanation of decisions, clarity of expectations, and fairness. From a restorative perspective, a person's actions are viewed as external to their inherent value and worth.

PROCEDURES FOR RESPONSIBLE PARTIES

THE SEVEN RESTORATIVE PRACTICES

A range of practices are fundamental to the restoration-focused ethos that underpins Waranara School Behaviour Management Policy. These restorative practices are integrated throughout the three tiers of behaviour management activities that are implemented within the school (refer *Behaviour Management Map*), and include:

1. **Restorative Basics:** Relational focus; Staff model restorative attitudes/behaviour; Strengths-based language/conversations; Supportive attitudes; Clear, firm boundaries/expectations to minimise harm.
2. **Community Circles**
3. **Positive Collegial Relationships** at Work
4. **Restorative Language and Conversations:** Use of affective 'I' statements and reflective strategies, as opposed to shame-generative discussion
5. **Brief Restorative Interventions**
6. **Classroom Conferences**
7. **Formal Restorative Conferences**

TIER ONE: EARLY INTERVENTION STRATEGIES FOR SCHOOL STAFF

- Staff will implement Tier One Student Conduct Process as a matter of course within the classroom. These strategies will be woven through all interactions and activities that form the foundational components of the Waranara School's education model.

RESTORATIVE PRACTICES

→ **RESTORATIVE BASICS**

- The key emphasis of restorative practice is relational.
- Positive relationships can be established where values and expectations are negotiated collaboratively "with" students
- Boundaries are communicated and implemented in a consistent, non-shaming manner
- Staff have a responsibility to model "right relationships" through language, expectations, and behaviour, to demonstrate patterns that prioritise mutually respectful interactions, and a co-operative approach to addressing harm when it occurs

→ **COMMUNITY CIRCLES**

- Students and staff join together in a shared 'circle' formation for communication around a common purpose
- Builds connectedness, with all participants able to contribute
- A 'talking piece' or symbolic object can be passed around the circle, to represent each group member's right to contribute to the conversation at a designated time within the shared community space.
- Pro-active rather than reactive communication strategy

→ **POSITIVE COLLEGIAL RELATIONSHIPS AT WORK**

- Staff recognise their responsibility to model respectful, supportive relationships with colleagues
- Positive staff culture influences interactions that occur with, and between, students
- Staff use affective 'I' statements, intentional mutual support strategies, reflective feedback processes in professional development activities, and relationship-focused conflict resolution activities
- Staff are "invested in each other's success", through intentional expressions of interest in professional and personal well-being

Other early intervention behaviour management strategies informed by a restorative practices' ethos include:

STUDENT ACCOUNTABILITY STRUCTURES

To ensure that young people are aware of Waranara School's boundaries and expectations for respectful behaviour prior to their formal enrolment at the school, staff will discuss accountability structures at initial the interview and/or orientation stage. Students will be provided with a document outlining their rights and responsibilities, along with a statement of guidelines and rules that underpin all school activities. Students will then be required to sign these documents prior to commencement, to verify their understanding of school expectations, and indicate their agreement to abide by the standard rules and guidelines.

In discussing these documents with students, staff will:

- Read through the accountability documents aloud wherever a young person is known (or observed) to have possible literacy concerns
- Enquire if they would add or change anything about the school's behavioural requirements or their own student responsibilities (prior to signing), and amend these on the documentation where appropriate or relevant
- Enquire if young people need clarification about the meaning or details of any statement contained within the accountability documents
- Advise the student that they can request staff to review the documents in future if they have suggestions for additions or require clarification about behavioural expectations etc.
- Inform students that the document may be re-visited in future, if individual behaviour or group dynamics indicate that there may be uncertainty about Waranara School's behavioural expectations.

Refer: *Student Rights and Responsibilities Form; Student Guidelines and Rules Form.*

PRE-ENROLMENT STRATEGIES

Referral/Intake Interviews

To assist staff in identifying possible areas where students may find it difficult to adhere to school behavioural expectations and guidelines, specific questions will be integrated into pre-enrolment and formal intake interviews that gather information about a student's background and responses to stress and conflict. Background checks from previous schools will be completed. Where it is identified that a young person has previously demonstrated behaviour that could put their own safety, or the safety of others, at risk, school staff may request that a Risk Assessment be completed. The need for this form will be established on a case-by-case basis, taking into account a student's capacity to identify protective intervention and support strategies.

* **TIER TWO: PROTECTIVE STAFF INTERVENTIONS**

- Staff will implement Tier Two Student Conduct Process where student behaviour does not meet with the standards outlined in school guidelines and rules, or may have a detrimental impact on the safety or well-being of other students/school staff.

RESTORATIVE PRACTICES

→ **RESTORATIVE CONVERSATIONS AND LANGUAGE**

- Conversations for problem-solving, characterised by affective 'I' statements and discussion about the impact of unwanted behaviour
- Focus on viewing a person's core worth and value as SEPARATE to their behaviour, which may have led to harm
- Provides a more accessible platform for participation in conversations about impact and resolution of harm, rather than focus on lectures and blame
- School staff aim to elicit mutual empathy and accountability from students, rather than underscoring the dominance of authoritarian power structures

→ **BRIEF RESTORATIVE INTERVENTIONS**

- Introduced when early intervention strategies have not been sufficient to address patterns of behaviour/incidents that result in harm/risk.
- Involves all parties involved in incidents that may have led to harm, including students who initiated problematic behaviour and those affected.

- Facilitated conversations/reflective activities between small groups or individuals designed to establish accountability, elicit increased awareness of harm/empathy, and articulate future intentions for behaviour and restoration of relationships
- Emphasis on establishing outcomes “with” students, rather than staff automatically acting “to” apply consequences or “for” specific individuals

TIER THREE: STAFF RESPONSES TO CRITICAL INCIDENTS AND SERIOUS HARM/RISK

- Staff will implement Tier Three Student Conduct Process where a student has been involved in a critical incident within the school community, which has resulted in a real or potential risk of serious harm.

RESTORATIVE PRACTICES

→ **CLASSROOM CONFERENCES**

- Formal tool, involves entire student group
- Designed for situations where the whole group has been disrupted/impacted by problematic behaviour or “divisive relationships”.
- Community Circle style communication about specific problem or issue, with a focus on non-blaming language, collaborative problem-solving emphasis
- Two ‘rounds’ of communication: First provides opportunity for group members to articulate personal impact of harm. Second round is focused on group members articulating restoration-focused intentions for the future.

→ **RESTORATIVE CONFERENCES**

- The most formal and structured restorative practice.
- Involves parents, students and staff after a serious incident or pattern of behaviour has resulted in harm
- Strengths-based foundations: with a facilitator guiding participants through the conversation
- Opportunities for individuals involved to discuss impact of harm, and explore opportunities, intentions or actions that will aid future resolution
- Involves preparation prior to conference and the use of scripted restorative questions etc.

SCHOOL TIME OUTS

In situations where students have identified on-going difficulties adhering to Waranara School’s behavioural expectations and responsibilities, school Time Out may be issued. Wherever possible, staff will invite students to collaboratively negotiate the terms of this stand-down, which will involve a period of absence from school for between 1-5 days. Circumstances where a Short-Term Stand-Down may be required include:

- Where a young person has been violent or abusive to students and/or staff
- Where a staff member identifies that a student has demonstrated a pattern of behavioural choices that may impede individual or group safety or well-being at Waranara School, and all other restorative strategies implemented have not yet proved effective.
- After two weeks, or 6 reminders have been issued.
- Situations of identified bullying or discrimination, where students have not demonstrated a willingness to consider the impact of their actions or adjust their behaviour

A Time Out will involve:

- A phone call by the Principal to discuss the terms of the Time Out.
- After the phone call, an official letter will be issued, advising students and parents/carers of the agreed conditions associated with the Time Out, and nominated school return dates etc. and return to school meeting date.
- A return to school meeting with Waranara School Principal where the incident is discussed. Moving forward, a reflection and support plan is created. This will be included in case notes.

EXPULSION

While staff are committed to working intensively with students to facilitate their on-going engagement and educational success at Waranara School, there are situations where it may be more appropriate for a young person to seek an alternate education or support pathway that is external to the school. An Expulsion may be issued in these circumstances, with Waranara School Principal requesting Expulsion in situations where:

- There have been multiple strategies implemented to support students to adhere to behavioural requirements or address safety issues, without any significant evidence of willingness to adjust behaviour or explore additional protective interventions
- A student has demonstrated a pattern of behaviour that continues to put individual or group safety and well-being at risk within the school, without expressing a corresponding willingness to address issues (e.g., a series of short-term school stand-downs have not been successful in resolving concerns etc.)
- There is a single incident involving a student's use of weapons or violence against other students or staff.
- Where it is established that a student's pattern of behavioural/relational choices places other individuals at significant risk, and Waranara School is not sufficiently equipped to ensure student or staff safety without changes that would alter the school's core activities, education school and target student group.

In situations where an Expulsion may be required, the following process will be implemented:

- Students and parents/caregivers will be invited to a formal meeting to discuss relevant issues with the School Principal. This invitation will be communicated via written correspondence and text message.
- Students will be provided with an opportunity to engage in a formal restorative/reflective dialogue about the situation, and indicate their perspectives in relation to the situation
- If the Principal subsequently determines that Expulsion is required, a formal letter will be issued to explain the basis for Waranara School's decision
- In line with the principles of procedural fairness, Waranara School promotes the right of all students to appeal and seek a review of these decisions. The Principal should also advise students and parents/carers of their right to submit a written complaint or grievance as per Waranara School's formal complaints policy.

REFERRAL TO LAW ENFORCEMENT AUTHORITIES/POLICE YOUTH LIAISON REPRESENTATIVE

In situations where a student has physically injured another young person or staff member, staff will mandatorily report this to local law enforcement authorities. Reports will also be lodged with police where students threaten to harm other students or staff members. Staff are also encouraged to consult with the local Police Youth Liaison representative where they require additional information or input about emerging student behaviours that may contribute to safety concerns within the school.

WARANARA SCHOOL CRITICAL INCIDENT POLICY AND PROTOCOLS

In situations where a student's behaviour has triggered a critical incident at Waranara School, staff will initiate and implement protective crisis management protocols as per the school *Critical Incident Response and Risk Prevention Policy*.

BEHAVIOUR MANAGEMENT

Organisational Priorities

In ALL cases where conflict or violence places WH&S at risk, Waranara School priorities are:

- A) Safety of (in order of priority):**
 1. Students, staff and visitors
 2. Any person who has acted as a perpetrator in an incident of violence or threatening behaviour
- B) The use of de-escalation principles.**
- C) Calling for back-up from another staff member and Waranara School Principal.**
- D) Putting school into lockdown and**
- E) Calling Police in circumstances where violence or a criminal offence may have been committed.**

Staff are NOT expected to:

- Put themselves in situations of serious risk in order to protect someone else
- Physically intervene when someone else (including a student) is at risk of being assaulted
- Attempt to protect money or property when it will place them at risk
- Attempt to pursue the offender if/when they leave a Waranara School site, as this is the role of law enforcement officers.

1.1 VERBAL ABUSE, HARASSMENT, THREATENING AND INTIMIDATING BEHAVIOUR, AND VIOLENCE AGAINST PROPERTY

If any person (student or associated family member, staff member etc.) is:

- verbally abusive, threatening or intimidating
- acting in such a manner that property is, or may be, damaged

Staff should:

1. Direct other students or personnel to an area away from the direct location of conflict, wherever possible.
2. Remind the person or student of their responsibilities within the school
3. In the case of a continuation of behaviour that is threatening or violent, advise the person that the police will be contacted for assistance
4. Ring the police immediately and follow their advice

In NO CIRCUMSTANCES are staff to use verbal or physical abuse, or intimidation of any kind, towards students, parents/carers or colleagues. This includes any form of corporal punishment, which is expressly prohibited as a form of behaviour management within Waranara School Programs. Use of corporal punishment may result in instant staff dismissal.

1.2 THREATS

A) Involving arson, a gun, a bomb, or other weapon.

Staff should:

- 1) Ring the Police Immediately and follow their advice
- 2) Evacuate the building if it is assessed as safe to do so.
- 3) In addition, if weapons or (potential weapons) are present:
 - Ask the person to leave and return to the premises only after discarding the instrument that could be used as a weapon
 - DO NOT attempt to disarm a person, but inform Waranara School Principal or Good Shepherd colleague for assistance, guidance and support

B) "Joke" Threats

If a person makes a threat against anyone "as a joke", always intervene and make it clear to everyone that this behaviour is unacceptable, even in circumstances where the intention might originally be for the purposes of humour. This intervention should be made with reference to specific program rights and responsibilities and behavioural rules and guidelines, related to expectations of a safe environment for all etc.

1.3 PHYSICAL VIOLENCE AGAINST A PERSON

In situations where there is physical violence against a person, staff should place the school into lockdown using the emergency channel on Teams and contact the Principal to call police if necessary.

GUIDELINES FOR PARENT/CARER INVOLVEMENT IN STUDENT CONDUCT PROCESSES

Waranara School seeks to work collaboratively with students, families, interagency stakeholders and support workers wherever possible, to assist young people to consolidate the broadest and most holistic support base from which to work toward their education goals. In relation to behaviour management, this collaborative approach means that staff will contact parents and carers where incidents occur that expose their children, other young people and/or Waranara School employees, to a higher level of risk. There may also be situations of lower-level risk where staff will opt to negotiate the terms of behavioural interventions directly with students, without parent/carer input.

The following information provides additional guidance about specific instances when parents/carers will be contacted in relation to behaviour management issues.

POLICY IMPLEMENTATION PROTOCOLS

Corporal Punishment

Under NO CIRCUMSTANCES are school staff to directly administer, or encourage the use of, corporal punishment against young people. Corporal punishment WILL NOT be tolerated within Waranara School and may constitute grounds for instant staff dismissal.

Procedural Fairness

In all circumstances where a student is subject to a period of Time Out or Expulsion, Waranara School will implement policies and procedures aligned with procedural fairness, as outlined above. That is:

- The right of students and parents/carers to be heard
- The right of students and parents/carers to an impartial decision
- The right for students to have a support person present at meetings related to their welfare
- The right for students and parents/carers to appeal Waranara School decisions and/or lodge official complaints or grievances with Waranara School on a Student Feedback Form
- The right of students to receive information in writing about decisions impacting their welfare.

NB. In line with Waranara School's commitment to restorative practices, the school elects to use language that is consistent with a restoration-focused/strengths-based behaviour management approach. As such, Waranara School uses the term "Time Out", rather than the more commonly used punitive references to "suspension" or "expulsion".

STUDENT CONDUCT PROCESS

- Positive Behaviour Cards are given to students who show commitment and respect in the classroom. If a student receives 3 cards in a week, a text is sent to parents. At assemblies, held twice per term, a random draw is held of all positive behaviour cards that have been issued in the previous weeks and the 4 chosen receive a gift voucher.
- Reminders are given out for unacceptable behaviour. If a second reminder is given on the same day, the student will come out of class and have a chat with a staff member (not in the Leadership Team) to understand what is going on and work to improve the behaviour. If 3 reminders have been issued in one day, the student will be sent home by the Leadership Team and parents will be advised via phone call or text. The next day the student will have an accountability conversation with a Leadership Team member and the Wellbeing Support Worker.
- Reminder Cap: If 4 reminders are issued in a week, a text is sent to parents. If 6 reminders are issued in a week, the Principal will organise a meeting with the parent and student. When 6 reminders in a week occurs for 2 weeks in a row, students will be put on time out for 2 days and on return will hold a meeting with the Principal.
- Students who:
 - leave the school premises without permission during school hours;
 - are seen smoking or vaping on school premises;
 - display extremely unacceptable behaviour;
 - are under the influence of alcohol or drugs;
 - Swear at or threaten a staff member or another student, are automatically sent home

Students are permitted to return to school the next day but must attend a restorative meeting with the Wellbeing Support Worker and a member of the Leadership Team. They may then return to class.

REFERENCES

DEFINITIONS

Restorative Practices: "Are based on principles that emphasise the importance of positive relationships as central to building community and involve processes that restore relationships when harm has occurred. The underlying premise of Restorative Practices rests with the belief that people will make positive changes when those in positions of authority do things with them rather than to them or for them."

(Source: Introduction to Restorative Practices, Training PowerPoint, San Francisco Unified School District)

Restorative Practices Continuum Definitions:

Affective Statements: Brief 'I'-focused comments about how people were impacted by another person's behaviour.

Affective Questions: One step further, asking the wrong-doer questions such as: Who was affected? How were they affected? Etc.

Small Impromptu Conference: Where relevant people come together to talk about an incident that has resulted in harm, its impact and what to do next.

The Large Group or Circle: Allows everyone to have some say in what should happen as a result of unwanted behaviour.

The Formal Conference: Involves more planning and preparation and tends to be more structured and complete. (Source: *Restorative Justice and Practices*, (2006) Fact Sheet, International Institute for Restorative Practices)

Critical Incidents: Traumatic events involving staff members and/or young people which include serious accidents or injury, violence or significant threats of violence, death of a young person, significant damage to property, drug use, overdose, revival, and similar events.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

- *Student Rights and Responsibilities Form (Annexure 1)*

SOURCES

Wachtel, T., (2013) *Defining Restorative*, International Institute for Restorative Practices

Vandering, D., (2010) *A Window on Relationships: Enlarging the Social Discipline Window for a Broader Perspective*

Restorative Justice and Practices, (2006) Fact Sheet, International Institute for Restorative Practices

Classen, R., (2002) *Restorative Justice in Everyday Life: Beyond the Formal Ritual*, Conference paper presented at Australian National University, Canberra

Halstead, S (1999), *Educational Discipline Using the Principles of Restorative Justice*

New Zealand Ministry of Education, (2012) Restorative Practices in NZ: The Seven Restorative Practices, @ <http://www.vln.school.nz/file/download/687795>

STUDENT CONDUCT MAP

Waranara School's Student Conduct Process can be represented in a graphical form, as included below. The triangle indicates the school's holistic and integrated approach to behaviour management, highlighting the various stages of intervention, and specific strategies available to staff.

The integrated nature of Waranara School's Student Conduct Process is an important factor in the overall effectiveness of the policy. Each restorative practice and individual behaviour management strategy indicated within the triangle can certainly be implemented separately, however, the best outcomes can be anticipated where staff adopt a consistent and committed approach to implementing each tier within the triangle. In addition, the foundational significance of positive relationships between staff and students is certainly a key element underpinning successful restorative practices, however the importance of intentionally supportive and positive relationships between staff should also be noted.

A final explanatory comment may provide further guidance to staff seeking elucidation about which behaviour management approach may apply in particular circumstances. The inclusion of separate strategies within a specific tier is not intended to be mandatorily deterministic. That is, where staff feel relationships can be improved and harm effectively and proportionately addressed through implementing an out-of-sequence strategy from another tier, this course of action may be initiated in consultation with colleagues and students.

