Development of Student Behaviour Support: Guidelines, Regulations and Procedures

Our community of schools values an inclusive approach to student support. We are entrusted to nurture and support students in a safe and welcoming environment that is grounded in our Catholic faith.

Brisbane Catholic Education’s Student Behaviour Support: Guidelines, Regulations and Procedures clearly indicates the requirements of schools and provides practical information to school communities on the implementation of the Student Behaviour Support Policy. These advices are based on current effective practices in our schools and communities and on an approach to Student Behaviour Support that is guided by current research. Brisbane Catholic Education’s Student Behaviour Support: Guidelines, Regulations and Procedures can be made available to parents.

A review and consultation process during 2012, involving a wide range of school representatives, has informed Student Behaviour Support: Guidelines, Regulations and Procedures.

Research evidence and professional experience suggest a wide range of causes of inappropriate behaviour and the complex nature of inappropriate behaviour implies that there is no single overall solution. Acknowledging this, Student Behaviour Support: Guidelines, Regulations and Procedures focuses on enhancing a positive school ethos to support the development of appropriate student behaviour and promote effective learning by establishing:

- Clearly stated expectations of what constitutes acceptable behaviour
- Effective behaviour support strategies
- Processes that recognise, teach, reward and celebrate positive behaviour
- Procedures, rules and sanctions to deal with inappropriate behaviour.

Brisbane Catholic Education acknowledges the challenges faced by teachers and related professionals in the field of education. It is therefore essential for schools to develop ways to support staff by providing professional learning opportunities and support systems. Furthermore, Brisbane Catholic Education considers that progress is most likely to be made if our schools, as learning communities, are supported to establish local solutions to local circumstances. As well, staff, students, parents/caregivers and others must be involved in key decision-making and have a stake in the processes and procedures adopted. Student Behaviour Support: Guidelines, Regulations and Procedures features key issues and principles that school communities should consider when developing their own Student Behaviour Support Plans.

Schooling in Australia

In 2008, the Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs agreed to develop a new national declaration on the goals of schooling to replace the Adelaide Declaration on National Goals in the Twenty-First Century (1999). The new declaration builds upon the Future of Schooling in Australia report that was released by the Council for the Australian Federation in September 2007. The resultant Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians was launched at the Australian Education Ministers’ First Biennial Forum held in Melbourne on 5 December 2008.
The Melbourne Declaration sets two educational goals for the next ten years:

- That Australian schooling promote equity and excellence; and
- That all young Australians become successful learners, confident and creative individuals and active and informed citizens.

Brisbane Catholic Education acknowledges that a shared value base is an important prerequisite for promoting positive behaviour and for responding effectively to behaviour problems when they occur. In a world that is constantly growing and evolving, students need to develop "….a set of knowledge skills, behaviours and dispositions, or general capabilities, that apply across the curriculum and that help them to become lifelong learners able to live and work successfully in the diverse world of the twenty-first century" ACARA.

Australian Catholic Education

The National Catholic Education Commission detailed the challenges facing Australian Catholic Schools in the 21st century, stating that

"Catholic schools in Australia continue to respond to, and to serve, the needs of the parents who seek a Catholic education for their children. In the building up of Christ’s Kingdom and Australian society, Catholic schools play a deliberate and vital role."

As explicitly acknowledged in The Catholic School on the Threshold of the Third Millennium (1997)

“… now, as in the past, the Catholic school must be able to speak for itself effectively and convincingly. It is not merely a question of adaptation, but of missionary thrust, the fundamental duty to evangelise, to go toward men and women wherever they are, so that they may receive the gift of salvation.” (Referenced from the Catholic School on the Threshold of the Third Millennium, 1997 introduction. Point #3.) NCEC

Brisbane Catholic Education

The Brisbane Catholic Education community of schools values an inclusive approach to student support and to nurturing and supporting students in a safe and welcoming environment grounded in our Catholic faith, in which respect, dignity and openness are key values. These fundamental values are foundational to our work with students, parents and colleagues in responding to an ecumenical multi-faith society.

The Strategic Renewal Framework for Catholic Schooling in the Archdiocese of Brisbane 2012 – 2016 articulates a tradition and vision that names values that are foundational to the way we engage with one another. It is expected that teachers, parents and students share the expressed values of this vision and contribute positively to the life of the school.
We believe, we value and we act. “Values must lead to action; they are the motivation for action” (The Religious Dimension of Education in a Catholic School, par 107).

Values…. “govern our actions, order our passions and guide our conduct according to reason and faith” (Catechism of the Catholic Church, par 1804).

In embracing the Archdiocesan Vision of “Jesus, Communion, Mission”, each Catholic community, organisation and individual collaboratively engages in the ministry of the Church. The educational mission of Brisbane Catholic Education, as an evangelising agent of the Catholic Church, is articulated in the Vision Statement for Catholic Education, namely to teach challenge transform the world through what it does and how it is done.

We are called to

TEACH

We promote faith in Jesus Christ, learning and teaching about Jesus and the gospel and faith of the Catholic Christian community. Learning is lifelong, life-giving and engages the whole person.

CHALLENGE

Inspired by the Holy Spirit, we challenge those we educate to live in communion with God, others, and the whole of creation in prayerful, sacramental, just, peaceful, inclusive and reconciling communities.

TRANSFORM

We educate for a transformed world in communion, by nurturing the gifts and potential of each person, enacting shared leadership, and exercising a preferential option for the poor and the marginalised.

The philosophical focus of Student Behaviour Support: Guidelines, Regulations and Procedures is on the purpose and outcomes of behaviour support, which are pedagogical and instructional practices that enable effective learning behaviours. The Brisbane Catholic Education Learning and Teaching Framework, “We teach”, Key message 1, states that “Teaching in Catholic schools is a ministry in which teachers work with students and create conditions for the outcomes of learning to contribute to the common good.”

Powell and Tod (2004) suggest that

All too often (teachers) perceive behaviour management to be solely concerned with establishing control over disruptive pupils. Teachers continue to seek more and more strategies in the hope that they will be better able to cope with anticipated classroom disruption (p.2).

Repeated surveys of Australian teachers have recorded their daily classroom experience in supporting student behaviour. It is not uncommon for teachers to report that they are facing increasing pressure to manage challenging behaviours and feel underprepared to be ‘behaviour specialists’ (AEU, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008 and 2009). In response, Student Behaviour Support: Guidelines, Regulations and Procedures promote the effective learning of behaviours by students, through clear processes and practices. It is in this area of promoting learning behaviour through teaching that the foundations for effective behaviour support in schools can be successfully managed.
We are fortunate in being able to draw on quality local research to inform our school behaviour programs in Australia. In 2002, the Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs (MCEETYA) established a Student Behaviour Management Project to provide advice to Ministers from each state and territory of Australia on programs that exhibit best practice in addressing student behaviour issues.

The seven following principles were acknowledged as essential guides to developing and implementing an effective school behaviour policy:

1. Student behaviour needs to be understood from an eco-systemic perspective. (That is, the behaviour of students is understood to affect and be affected by the context and the behaviour of others);

2. Student behaviour support programs and practices must embrace a health-promoting approach to creating a safe, supportive and caring learning environment;

3. Student behaviour support programs and practices must embrace inclusiveness, by catering for the different potentials, needs and resources of all students;

4. Student behaviour support programs and practices should incorporate a student-centred philosophy that places the student at the centre of the education process and focuses on the whole student - personal, social, emotional and academic;

5. Student behaviour is inextricably linked to the quality of the learning experience;

6. Positive relationships, particularly between student and teacher, are critical for maximising appropriate behaviour and achieving learning outcomes; and

7. Effective student behaviour change and student behaviour support are enhanced through internally based school support structures and externally based family, education, community and interagency partnerships.

These seven principles also mirror many of the recommended areas for improvement nominated by school representatives, school personnel, students and parents in the Brisbane Catholic Education Student Behaviour Support: Consultation Report (2007).

In 2012, further consultations on Student Behaviour Support: Guideline, Regulations and Procedures took place. Feedback from the consultations indicated that each group agreed in principle that Student Behaviour Support: Guidelines, Regulations and Procedures should

- Emphasise Catholic ethos throughout policy documents
- Make explicit reference to diverse needs of students
- Strengthen the “policy to practice” pathway
- Support procedural requirements with clear diagrams
- Use consistent language throughout all materials
- Focus on preventative and positive actions to support behaviour
- Reduce the length of text and diversify the information form
- Provide links to legislation, policies and resources and
- Provide clearly defined school and parent roles.
To help tailor a practical and useful resource for school communities, the remaining sections of *Student Behaviour Support: Guidelines, Regulations and Procedures* and supporting materials will provide links to additional information. This information supports the use of a positive approach, moving from whole school (programs and systems for all) to the individual student level (programs and systems for few) to highlight the multiple points of support. The positive behaviour support approach can accommodate behavioural theories and practices provided that they are able to align with the three key aspects of systems, data and practices. Figure 1 below illustrates features of the systems level approach.

**Figure 1: Positive Behaviour Support Systems Perspective**

In each level, we suggest that school teams consider the following three dimensions when designing or reviewing all school behaviour policies:

1. **Practices**
   Are interventions and strategies evidence-based?

2. **Data**
   Is information used to identify suitability, need for change and effects of interventions?

3. **Systems**
   Do supports enable the accurate and durable implementation of the selected practices (Sugai and Horner, 2006)?

Templates, checklists and hyperlinks to relevant resources are provided on the Brisbane Catholic Education portal to support staff to implement policy requirements.