CATHOLIC EDUCATION
Archdiocese of Canberra & Goulburn

Title	Safe and Supportive Schools Policy
Description of policy	This policy outlines the general expectations for Catholic Education, Archdiocese of Canberra and Goulburn (CECG) workers to foster and maintain supportive and respectful schools. It communicates the principles of the 2015 Schools for All Children and Young People report of the expert panel on students with complex needs and challenging behaviour.
Required because	Provides high standards of educational delivery and service.
Description of changes	Non-material formatting and minor language changes only.
Applies to	☒ Organisation-wide
	☐ Staff only ☐ Students only ☒ Staff and students
Status	☐ New ☐ Major revision of existing document ☒ Minor revision of existing document

Publication location	Intranet and Public Website
Related documents	Supporting Students with Additional Needs Policy Behavioural Support, Suspension and Expulsion Policy School and ELC Bullying and Harassment Policy
Intranet category	Child Protection and Student Wellbeing Registration
Review date	May 2025
Trim reference number	R591211

Approval authority for this version:	School and Family Services Leader
Approval date:	15/5/2023
Accountable authority	School and Family Services Leader
Responsible officer	Senior Officer: Inclusion, Wellbeing and Diversity

1. Summary

1.1 This policy outlines the expectations for Catholic Education, Archdiocese of Canberra and Goulburn (CECG) workers to foster and maintain supportive and respectful schools. It applies to all CECG workers, in all CECG Schools.

2. Safe and Supportive Schools Policy

2.1 CECG is committed to providing positive and engaging environments where students and staff feel safe, connected, respected, achieve success, and are fully engaged in education.

A Student-Centred Vision

2.2 A student-centred vision is paramount to the ethos of CECG schools. This vision is underpinned by the values and findings of the Schools for The Alice Springs (Mparntwe) Education Declaration[1] and the Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians[2], which place the student at the centre of all learning. A student-centred approach takes into account the specific needs of each student, in their family, school, peer group and community contexts.

Safe and Orderly Environments

2.3 System schools provide orderly school environments that help students feel safe, respected, supported and able to engage in their learning.

Giving Priority to Relationships

2.4 Effective relationships are fundamental to learning. Teachers and students can proactively influence the dynamics of the classroom and develop the relationships that will support participation in learning where everyone belongs.

Fostering Wellbeing - Linking Wellbeing, Learning and Behaviour

2.5 Catholic Education acknowledges the inter-connectedness of wellbeing and learning. Schools are places where the wellbeing of the whole child is a priority. Students who have higher levels of wellbeing have better learning and achievement outcomes at school.

Collaborating at all levels

2.6 Learning happens within the context of community. Therefore, Catholic Education fosters purposeful collaborative relationships at all levels within the school and the broader community. These relationships are fundamental to achieving quality outcomes for students. These relationships require active communication and consultation between students, teachers, parents/carers, the parish, the school and the wider community. Where students are involved in the collaboration process evidence indicates that they take responsibility for what happens in the classroom, care about their classmates, and become more engaged in learning.

2.7 This policy reflects principles of high-quality education outlined in the Education Act 2004 (ACT) and the Education Act 1990 (NSW) and student safety and wellbeing practices outlined in the National Safe Schools Framework.

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[1] https://www.education.gov.au/alice-springs-mparntwe-education-declaration/resources/alice-springs-mparntwe-education-declaration
[2] https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED534449

2.8   This policy is consistent with ACT, NSW and Commonwealth human rights and anti-discrimination laws, which protect individuals from unfavourable treatment on a number of grounds including religion, sex, sexuality, gender identity, disability, and race.

2.9   The National Privacy Principles (1988) protect individuals' rights relating to the collection, use, storage and disclosure of personal information and personal health information held by government agencies.

2.10   All school community members are expected to comply with the federal legislation including the Crimes Act 1914 and Criminal Code Act 1995, and with the respective ACT legislation: the Criminal Code Act 2001 and the Crimes Act 1900, and the NSW Crimes Act 1900. This legislation governs but is not limited to unlawful behaviour involving weapons, alcohol, drugs, dangerous acts, vandalism, violence, harassment, digital technology and sexual misconduct.

3.   Definitions

3.1   **Diversity**: is about recognising the value of all individuals. Diversity can include sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, language, ethnicity, cultural background, age, religious belief, family makeup and family responsibilities. Diversity also refers to other ways in which people differ, such as educational level, life experience, work experience, socio-economic background, personality, marital status and abilities/disabilities. Diversity is about everyone belonging.

3.2   **Everyone belongs**: Jesus' love reveals that we are made in God's image and likeness. We are marked by our similarities and differences but made one in our humanness. People's differences are not only expected, but celebrated, and are seen as opportunities for flourishing. School communities are diminished if one person is missing.

3.3   **Duty of care**: the responsibility to exercise reasonable care to protect the safety of any student and staff against injury that could reasonably be foreseen.

3.4   **Protective Action**: describes the interventions taken by System school staff to minimise the risk when a significant danger is present. This might include restrictive practices, non-physical interventions and changes to the immediate environment. The danger may be from the actions of a person or from hazards in the immediate environment.

3.5   **Respectful relationships**: are interpersonal interactions where all parties feel safe, are treated with dignity, fairness, are valued and belong. This concept applies to all relationships, including friendships, student-student, student-teacher, teacher-family, external partners.

3.6   **Restrictive Practice**: a practice or intervention that has the effect of restricting the rights or freedom of movement of a person, with the primary purpose of protecting the person or others from harm. Restrictive practices must not be used to gain compliance in students and must never be used on their own but, should instead be employed within the context of an overall positive behaviour support plan.

3.7   **Community**: The term is used generally to include all stakeholders associated with a school. This may include, but is not limited to students, staff, parents, families, parishes, volunteers and outside agencies.

3.8   **Social and Emotional Learning (SEL)**: is the process through which students acquire and effectively apply the knowledge, attitudes, and skills necessary to understand and self-regulate their emotions, set and achieve positive goals, understand and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive respectful relationships, and make responsible decisions.

3.9 **Wellbeing**: is defined as a state of positive psychological functioning that allows people to thrive, flourish, realises their own potential and engage positively with other people, thus making a contribution to the community. Student and staff wellbeing cannot be viewed in isolation from a broader school context. School communities provide both the defining context and have the potential to significantly influence well-being.

3.10 **Violence**: is the use of force, threatened or actual, against another person(s) that results in psychological harm, property damage, injury or in extreme cases death. Violence may involve provoked or unprovoked acts and can be a single incident, a random act or can occur over time. Threatened or actual actions that involve implements used as weapons or actual weapons are considered to be serious acts of violence.

4. Related Documents and Legislation

4.1 Related CECG Documents:

- Supporting Students with Additional Needs Policy
- Behavioural Support, Suspension and Expulsion Policy
- School and ELC Bullying and Harassment Policy

4.2 Related legislation or Standards

- The Alice Springs (Mparntwe) Education Declaration
- Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians

5. Contact

5.1 For support or further questions relating to this policy, contact the School and Family Services Team.