



## BEHAVIOUR MANAGEMENT AND DISCIPLINE POLICY

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## 1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to outline The Nature School Inc's (TNS) approach to the management of students' behaviour, ensuring disciplinary procedures are based on principles of procedural fairness.

## 2. Context

The Behaviour Management and Discipline Policy applies to all students at TNS. Staff ensure that the policy is carried out and also act as role models for the expected behaviour. TNS fosters an environment of mutual respect and will not tolerate behaviour by students which does not support a respectful learning environment for all.

TNS adheres to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (Article 28/Right to Education) and promotes an atmosphere where all people are afforded the utmost respect as follows: *Discipline in schools should respect children's dignity. For children to benefit from education, schools must be run in an orderly way – without the use of violence. Any form of school discipline should take into account the child's human dignity.* For this reason TNS adopts a behaviour management approach consistent with restorative practice.

Relevant legislation	Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010 Children's Services Act 1996 (CSA) <i>The Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998 (NSW) (the Care and Protection Act)</i>
Related TNS policies	TNS Child Protection Policy TNS Grievance Resolution Policy TNS Wellbeing Policy TNS Anti-Bullying Policy TNS Safe and Supporting Environment Policy

### 3. Policy

It is TNS policy that:

- All students are to observe the School's rules. These rules also serve as a readily understandable code of conduct for children and are built on a foundation of **safety, respect** and **learning**:

***Keep yourself safe – Keep others safe***

***Respect yourself – Respect others – Respect the environment***

***Never stop learning – Never stop others from learning***

- Concerns regarding student behaviour will be addressed quickly and effectively, through a restorative approach, in order to maintain a positive and productive learning environment for all students.
- Corporal punishment is expressly prohibited.
- TNS is committed to:
  - principles of procedural fairness, including both the hearing rule and the right to an unbiased decision
  - establishing and maintaining high standards of expected student behaviour
  - creating a safe and supportive culture that allows students to play and learn
  - transparent communication regarding student behaviour
  - maintaining confidentiality wherever possible

This policy does not address disciplinary matters involving staff or volunteers.

### 4. Definitions

**The hearing rule** - the right of the person who has had allegations made against them to:

- know the specific allegation and any other information which will be taken into account in considering the matter;
- know the process by which the matter will be considered;
- have the opportunity to respond to the allegations;
- know how to seek a review of the decision made in response to the allegations.

**Right to an unbiased decision** - the right to

- an impartial investigation and decision-making process
- an unbiased decision-maker

**Unacceptable Behaviours** - the following behaviours are unacceptable regardless of whether they occur in the classroom, on the playground, on excursions, at sporting activities, during special events or online:

- bullying of other students, including physical, social or psychological bullying, as per TNS Anti-Bullying Policy
- disrespect towards other students or staff
- derogatory comments about other students or staff in any forum
- deliberately not following teacher instruction
- vandalism
- swearing
- stealing from other students, staff or the School
- exclusion or mistreatment of a person with a disability
- physical aggression
- discrimination
- coercing another student to engage in unacceptable behaviours
- repeated minor offences that impact other students

**Non-Negotiable Behaviours** - the following behaviours are deemed as both non-negotiable and unacceptable:

- swearing at, open defiance or abuse towards any staff or member of the community while representing TNS
- violent or threatening behaviour
- carrying or using a weapon
- possession, use, giving, or selling of any illegal substance, including vapes, cigarettes, alcohol, and any other drugs
- engaging in criminal behaviour relating to School property

**Suspension** - mandatory leave assigned to a student as a consequence of serious behaviour. Suspension can last anywhere from one day to several weeks, during which time the student is not allowed to attend regular School lessons. Suspensions may be undertaken at home or in-school.

**Exclusion** – the act of preventing a student’s admission to a number of schools. TNS does not practice exclusion.

**Expulsion** - the termination of a student’s enrolment due to persistent violation of School rules, or for a single offense of appropriate severity in extreme cases.

## **5. Procedures**

### **5.1 Rules and student responsibilities**

The School rules about safety, learning and respect (outlined above) cover a broad range of behaviours and expectations. They are applicable to all students at all times, whether during learning or play, onsite or offsite, or online. The rules are clearly displayed in the School and students are regularly reminded of these rules. These rules are reflective of students’ rights. At TNS:

- every child has the right to feel safe
- every child has the right to be respected
- every child has the right to learn

### **5.2 Restorative Practice**

All staff at TNS adopt a restorative approach to behaviour management. Restorative practice is a whole school teaching and learning approach that encourages respectful behaviour. It recognises that behaviour is influenced by a range of factors and seeks to address the underlying influences through empathy, relationship-building, communication, social and emotional learning, and accountability. A restorative approach focuses on building, maintaining and restoring positive relationships when conflict or wrongdoing has occurred, or harm has been caused.

Consistent language regarding behaviour is important for maintaining a whole school approach. At TNS, when wrongdoing has occurred teachers ask the following restorative questions, which are also printed on 'Think Cards':

- What happened?
- What were you thinking or feeling?
- Which School Rule have you broken? (Safety, Learning or Respect?)
- Who has been affected / harmed / impacted? In what way?
- How will you make it right?

To maintain a positive and productive learning environment, and encourage appropriate individual or collaborative behaviour, teachers may use a range of strategies including class circles and explicit teaching for social and emotional learning. Such strategies should be appropriate to the age and needs of the students, in keeping with the ethos of the School, and evaluated regularly for their effectiveness.

#### 5.4 Responding to Incidents

Outlined below are the four levels of adult response to behaviours by students at TNS. Incidents may be responded to by teachers, the Assistant Head of School (AHOS) or Head of School (HOS) depending on the circumstances. While this flowchart outlines the preferred response, at times it may be varied due to the situation which has occurred, the extent of harm caused or the impact on other students, a student's disability (see 5.6 Responding to Students with a disability), or the availability of staff.

	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
Behaviour of students	Minor incidents	Repeated minor incidents	Unacceptable behaviours, serious incident, incident leading to injury, bullying	Non-negotiable behaviours, repeated unacceptable behaviours, repeated serious incidents, persistent bullying

Response of adults	Class teacher or staff on playground supervision to respond using restorative approach	Class teacher or staff on playground supervision to respond using restorative approach	Class teacher or staff on playground supervision to refer to AHOS	↓
		Teacher responding to record incident on Sentral	Teacher responding to record incident on Sentral	Any relevant incidents to be recorded on Sentral.
		May refer to AHOS to respond using restorative approach	AHOS to respond using restorative approach and notify parents	<b>Refer immediately to AHOS and/or HOS.</b> AHOS / HOS to review Sentral notes. Review Behaviour Plan if in place.
		Class teacher or AHOS notify parents	AHOS may conduct formal interview if required and/or meet with parents to establish Behaviour Plan	AHOS conduct formal interviews or meetings as required
			Possible suspension – Refer to HOS	Outcome referred to HOS - possible suspension or expulsion

The following provides further procedural detail at each level:

### Level 1 - Responding to minor incidents

- It is expected that most students need regular reinforcement of School Rules and ongoing reminders of behavioural expectations. The frequency of these reminders is dependent on the developmental age of the students.

- When students breach School Rules, despite appropriate reminders, staff use a restorative approach by engaging the student/s with the following questions, which are printed on 'Think Cards' in all classrooms:
  - What happened?
  - What were you thinking or feeling?
  - Which School Rule have you broken? (Safety, Learning or Respect?)
  - Who has been affected / harmed / impacted? In what way?
  - How will you make it right?
- Staff to remind student/s following a 'Think Card' conversation that if behaviours continue, they will be referred to the Assistant Head of School.

### **Level 2 - Responding to repeated minor incidents**

- If a student continues to breach either the Safety, Learning or Respect rule, despite appropriate reminders by a staff member and working through the 'Think Cards', the student may be referred to the AHOS.
- Referring teacher to record the incident/s on Sentral.
- AHOS to work through a more formalised version of the restorative questions on a reflection sheet, including a plan for restoration.
- Either AHOS or class teacher to notify student's parents, whichever is most appropriate.
- If the AHOS is absent, Level 2 behaviours may be addressed by a Coordinator.

### **Level 3 - Responding to Unacceptable behaviours, serious incidents, incident leading to injury, or bullying**

- Teacher responding to record incident in Sentral and refer to AHOS.
- Wellbeing team to provide support to other students impacted by behaviour if required.
- AHOS to work through a more formalised version of the restorative questions on a reflection sheet, including a plan for restoration. Additionally:
  - Unacceptable behaviours – must be discussed with HOS to determine the course of action

- Incidents leading to injury – may require an Incident/Accident/Near Miss report to be completed
- Depending on the specific circumstances, the AHOS may conduct a formal interview and/or invite parents to a formal behaviour meeting to co-construct a Behaviour Plan.
- In some cases, the AHOS may make a recommendation to the HOS that suspension should be considered as an appropriate consequence.
- Decisions regarding suspension are at the discretion of the HOS.
- If the AHOS is absent, Level 3 behaviours may be addressed by a Senior Coordinator (such as Coordinator of Teaching and Learning) or referred directly to the HOS.

**Level 4 – Responding to Non-negotiable behaviours, repeated unacceptable behaviours, repeated serious incidents, or persistent bullying**

- Student to be referred immediately to AHOS or HOS.
- HOS to notify NSW Police if required.
- Wellbeing team to provide support to other students impacted by behaviour if required.
- AHOS and HOS to review Sentral notes provided by teachers, and review Behaviour Plan if in place.
- AHOS to gather additional information if required, including witness statements from other students or staff. Confidentiality should be maintained as far as is reasonably practicable.
- AHOS to conduct formal interviews as required (see 5.5 Conducting investigations), and make recommendation to HOS regarding appropriate consequence.
- In the case of persistent bullying, AHOS to conduct formal bullying investigation (see 5.5 Conducting investigations), as per TNS Anti-Bullying Policy
- Decisions regarding suspension or expulsion are at the discretion of the HOS.
  - Suspension may occur either in School or out of School, for one (1) or more days, dependent upon the circumstances as decided by the HOS.

- Suspension may require the provision of class work to be completed , if appropriate.
- If suspension has previously occurred, the HOS will discuss with the student and their parents/carers whether the student’s enrolment at the School is in the best interests of the student’s education and the School community’s welfare.
- Expulsion may occur dependent upon the circumstances as decided by the HOS.
- If a Level 4 serious incident occurs while the HOS is absent, the AHOS or acting Teacher In Charge (TIC) must make every reasonable attempt to contact the HOS. If the HOS is non-contactable, the Board Chair must be notified by direct phone call. The Board Chair will advise the AHOS to assume responsibility for immediate response to the situation unless or until the HOS can be contacted.

### **5.5 Conducting formal investigations**

A parent or guardian should be present at formal meetings regarding serious behavioural concerns, and be provided with a copy of this Policy. An interpreter should also be offered if required. If a parent/guardian chooses not to attend the requested meeting, or is not available, the School Psychologist or another appropriate support person should be identified to attend.

- Procedural fairness must be adhered to, including the hearing rule and the right to an unbiased decision. The student must
  - be told details of the specific allegation, which may include an outline of allegations made in witness statements (while protecting the identity of witnesses as far as is reasonably practicable);
  - be told the process by which the matter will be considered;
  - have the opportunity to respond to the allegations;
  - be told how to seek a review of any decision made.
- To ensure an unbiased decision, it is preferable for the AHOS (or an appropriate Coordinator) to conduct the formal investigation and the HOS to make a determination.

- Where it is not possible for different people to carry out the investigation and decision-making, the HOS may undertake both roles, however they must be reasonable and objective, act justly, and be seen to do so. It is preferable for a second member of staff to be present as an observer.
- Records must be kept of all meetings and interviews conducted as part of the investigation. These records are for the School's internal purposes.
- In making a determination and, where necessary, discerning an appropriate consequence, the HOS will consider the collective welfare of the School community and the individual needs of the student.
- The HOS will communicate the outcome in writing to the parent or guardian, including key points from the meeting, and how to seek review of any decision made in relation to the allegation. Requests to review the decision should be made in writing, as per TNS Grievance Resolution Policy.

#### **5.6 Responding to students with a disability**

At all levels of behavioural concern, where a student has a diagnosed disability or identified additional needs, this must be given appropriate consideration. The student's Individual Plan should be consulted and it may be appropriate to discuss with the Coordinator of Learning Support.

#### **5.7 Prohibited Consequences**

Corporal punishment is expressly prohibited. The administering of corporal punishment by non-School persons, including parents, to enforce discipline at the School is not condoned. Where the use of corporal punishment is brought to the attention of the School and constitutes Risk of Significant Harm to the child, notification will be made as per TNS Child Protection Policy.