

## **Berengarra School**

*Berengarra takes a zero-tolerance approach to child abuse and is fully committed to ensuring that its strategies, policies, procedures and practices meet all Child Safety Standards as specified in Ministerial Order No. 1359 (2022).*

## **Relational Practices and Management of Students**

Berengarra School policy relating to student discipline is based on principles of procedural fairness and does not permit corporal punishment.

### **Purpose**

Berengarra School has developed a wellbeing focus at the core of its educational program, in order to support positive student behaviour and encourage student voice. The school promotes building positive relationships and uses a restorative approach to resolving conflict and managing behaviour that may cause harm to our school community. The school believes all behaviour at school should align with our values of Hope, Belonging, Nurturing and Success.

### **Context**

Schools may work with students for behaviour incidents:

- occurring at school
- at a school activity away from the school grounds
- while travelling to or from school or a school activity
- negative online behaviour between school community members

The school processes and restorative approaches are part of an all-staff classroom management plan and are consistent with a whole school approach to behaviour management.

### **Relationships**

Relationships are central to every aspect of the Berengarra School program. The primary mechanism with which student behaviour is managed is through deliberate and mindful relationship building, maintaining and repair of relationships between staff and students and between students themselves.

Teaching students in Home Groups aims to embed a strong sense of nurture and belonging. This structure allows for relationships to be simplified, with students only needing to negotiate with a limited number of peers and staff throughout their day. Safe and secure relationships involve nurture, empathy and understanding as well as fair and consistent implementation of rules and boundaries. When students feel safe and secure, they are best placed to engage effectively in learning and find space and support to address behavioural challenges. When students' behaviour is at its most challenging, the focus on relationship needs to be at the forefront of decision making around how to address the behaviour.

Berengarra School students usually come with backgrounds of difficult relationships in previous school settings and their home life. Rupture of relationships is inevitable for everyone. For our students, especially through the process of relationship formation, rupture can be frequent and unpredictable as students test the boundaries and limits in place and whether they are safe and accepted.

## **School Processes**

The school has detailed processes when working with our students on any behavioural matter. As outlined, strong relationships and communication are key to our school community and the school adopts a restorative approach to resolving any behavioural matters. The school believes that students should be firstly educated around any behaviour that is not appropriate or unacceptable, enabling students to understand what is expected from and take responsibility for their own actions, allowing them to address any harm caused by their behaviour. In cases when the behaviour has affected other members of the school community, students will be given a voice by being invited to participate in a restorative conversation to repair the harm and repair the relationship.

## **Cool-Offs**

Students are encouraged to use a 'cool off' when required in class. This is aimed at helping students develop skills in managing their own emotional state, with the goal of minimal disruption to their learning and the learning of others. Students can ask for a cool-off or it can be suggested by a staff member. After the cool-off process, students are required to return to their class.

## **Reminders**

Students are given reminders in class to manage unwanted classroom behaviour. This process is used by staff to instruct students on what behaviour is causing issue.

## **Step-Out**

At the Box Hill Campus students will be sent for a Step-Out if they have received three reminders in a class. Students can be given a Step-Out without three reminders in circumstances where their behaviour has been abusive or dangerous. In Step-Out, students are supported to use strategies from their Focus Plan to aid their regulation.

Students are encouraged, if ready, to discuss what happened in class or, if there is an issue that needs to be resolved, what they may change in the future to lead to a different outcome. Once able, they can complete schoolwork in the Step-Out room until the next class begins.

Students on Step-Out are not to return to class. If a student receives Step-Outs in two consecutive classes, they may be deemed 'Not Ready to Learn'. In this instance, the parents/guardians/carers will be contacted, and the student sent home. The student can then return to school the following day.

At the Chadstone Campus if a student receives 5 reminders during the day, they will be deemed as 'Not Ready to Learn.' In this situation the parents/guardians/carers will be contacted, and the student sent home. The student can then return to school the following day.

## **Agreements**

An 'agreement' can be put into place with a student and their family after a behaviour/incident or to address an ongoing issue which requires further action. This step is generally taken after substantial work has been undertaken to support a student with their behaviour, or after a serious incident. As part of the process of an agreement, a student will not attend at least one day of school to allow the student to process what has happened. The aim of agreements is to put further strategies in place to assist a student with their behavioural challenges and ensure unsafe behaviour does not negatively impact the school community in an ongoing way. Student voice is an important part of these agreements to provide a platform for students to take responsibility for their behaviour/issue and discuss what support they need to help them work on the issue.

There are four agreements that are worked through, usually sequentially:

- 1) First Agreement
- 2) Second Agreement
- 3) Third Agreement
- 4) Last Agreement

Each agreement will be active for 5 weeks in total. If a student does not complete an agreement, they may move on to the next step. If the student does not successfully complete a Last Agreement, it is likely they will lose their enrolment at Berengarra School. Throughout this process parents/guardians/carers will be informed and asked to attend meetings at the school.

If an incident/behaviour is assessed as serious, there may be times where this process may not be followed sequentially, and a student may start on a higher agreement or may be put on an agreement for a longer time period. In very rare circumstances a student's behaviour/incident may result in them losing their place at the school, without having gone through the agreement process (See withdrawal of enrolment).

## **Ready to Learn**

If students are unwell, have not had their prescribed medication or are having a particularly difficult time trying to regulate their emotional state or follow school processes, a student may be classed as 'Not Ready to Learn'. In this instance, a member of the Leadership Team will decide whether a student needs to be sent home. Students, in consultation with a member of Leadership, can also make a request with valid reasons to leave school, if they feel they are 'not ready to learn' that day. If the decision is taken that a student should finish their school day early, their parent/guardian/carer will be contacted, and arrangements made to go home.

Students who are sent home for being not ready to learn will generally return to school the following day.

## **Students Sent Home**

When this decision is made parents/guardians/carers must be contacted and a decision made whether the child is safe to travel home individually or will be collected from school.

## **Time Off Program**

On occasion, a student may need a break from the program for various reasons and be asked to miss a day/s of school. A meeting or phone call to parents/guardians/carers would be made to discuss next steps. The purpose of any such meeting would be to, in discussion with the student and parent/guardian, try to establish the cause of the issue and agree on strategies for future management.

## **Targeted Support Meetings**

A Targeted Support Meeting is arranged when a student is presenting with a particular behaviour of concern or a situation which requires more support to address than general school processes. Examples of behaviour that may require a Targeted Support Meeting include bullying and harassment, poor attendance, frequently being sent home from school, abuse of staff, physical violence, property damage, running away from school, unsafe behaviour, self-harm/suicidal ideation, return from school following an incident or extended absence, drug or alcohol issues etc.

A Targeted Support Meeting will be arranged anytime an Agreement is made or a Safety Plan developed. Targeted Support Meetings will usually involve parents/carers/guardians and the student, but if not possible, will always happen with the knowledge and input of parents/guardians/carers.

## **Withdrawal from certain activities**

If a student's behaviour has been deemed by Leadership as unsafe, there may be times when a student is withdrawn from certain activities, excursions or camps for safety reasons. If this should occur the parents/guardians/carers will be contacted, and the reasons explained.

## **Withdrawal of a student's enrolment from the school**

In very rare cases a student's enrolment at Berengarra School may be withdrawn and the student will need to find another educational setting.

A student's enrolment at Berengarra School being withdrawn is a serious disciplinary measure for when all other measures have not produced a satisfactory response.

Berengarra School reserves the right, without recourse, to withdraw a student's enrolment from the school and another educational setting be identified at the absolute discretion of the Principal, or any person acting on behalf of the Principal, in the following circumstances:

- The student fails to successfully complete a 'Last Agreement'
- The Principal, or any person acting for the Principal, considers that a student's behaviour is of such a serious nature that there is a significant risk of harm or risk to the health, safety and wellbeing of other members of the school community.
- The student repeatedly leaves the school grounds thereby posing a risk of harm to themselves and the school is unable to keep the student safe

- The student fails to attend Berengarra School, and it is evaluated by the Leadership Team that Berengarra School is not the correct educational setting for the student.
- The student behaves in such a way as to pose a danger, whether actual, perceived or threatened, to the health, safety or wellbeing of any person
- The student causes significant damage to or destruction of property
- The student commits or attempts to commit or is knowingly involved in the theft of property
- The student possesses, uses or sells or deliberately assists another person to possess, use or sell illicit substances or weapons
- The student fails to comply with any clear and reasonable instruction of a staff member so as to pose a danger, whether actual, perceived or threatened, to the health, safety or wellbeing of any person
- The student consistently engages in behaviour that vilifies, defames, degrades or humiliates another person based on age, breastfeeding, gender, identity, impairment, industrial activity, lawful sexual activity, marital status, parent or carer status, physical features, political belief or activity, pregnancy, race, religious belief or activity, sex, sexual orientation, personal association (whether as a relative or otherwise) with a person who is identified by reference to any of the above attributes
- The student consistently behaves in an unproductive manner that interferes with the wellbeing, safety or educational opportunities of any other student
- The student no longer requires, benefits from, or responds to, the special education provision offered by Berengarra School and it is considered by Leadership that another educational or workplace setting would better meet their particular educational, employment and/or behavioural needs

If a student's enrolment at Berengarra School is to be withdrawn, the Principal, or any person working on their behalf will:

- thoroughly and fairly investigate the circumstances
- invite the parent/care giver and the student to attend a Targeted Support Meeting
- consider all of the information available, in order to make a decision about whether withdrawal is the only available option
- meet to investigate transition options

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