



## POLICIES

# Supporting Students with Complex Social and Emotional Needs Policy

## Classification

**Policy Number:** TL201602-2.0 • **Version/Last Updated:** 2.0 / June 2017 • **Audience:** Public • **Commencement:** 1 January 2017

## Implementation Resources

[Supporting Students with Complex Social and Emotional Needs Guidelines](#)

### ▼ 1.0 Rationale

Sydney Catholic Schools (SCS) has a commitment to providing high-quality student wellbeing and pastoral care, and this has become an essential element and defining characteristic of our systemic schools. Contemporary Catholic schools have a commitment to provide safe and supportive school communities that embrace individual differences and optimise student outcomes. The management of students at educational risk reflects this commitment by acknowledging the complex needs and individual circumstances of these students, and by positively responding to and promoting student safety, diversity and individual dignity.

A collaborative, consistent, whole-school approach is essential to successful outcomes and underpins all aspects of this document. The focus is on collaborative, proactive strategies that promote early intervention and seek to minimise disengagement from learning. Strategic planning characterised by student-centred support, which encourages positive relationships with parents/caregivers and outside agencies, promotes better mental health and life outcomes.

### ▼ 2.0 Guiding Principles

- 2.1 Each person is created in the image and likeness of God.
- 2.2 The dignity of every member of the school community is respected. Students bring diverse needs and experiences to the classroom that may require various adjustments to the teaching and learning environment.
- 2.3 All schools have an obligation to ensure safe, supportive and respectful teaching and learning communities that promote student wellbeing. Teachers make a difference when they actively embrace change, establish positive practices related to behaviour management.
- 2.4 All individuals have the right to a learning environment in which they feel safe and supported. Students have a responsibility to learn and practise safe and appropriate behaviours.
- 2.5 Parents/caregivers have an integral role to play and a responsibility in assisting schools to develop safe and supportive communities.

- 2.6 Successful interventions are underpinned by strong staff-student relationships, and require an understanding of the underlying factors influencing behaviour and the immediate triggers for its occurrence.

### ▼ 3.0 Policy

- 3.1 A school must develop a targeted intervention response when concerns arise about a student's behaviour.
- 3.2 A school's management of students with complex emotional and social needs must reference the associated [guidelines](#) to this policy, which consist of a series of four staged interventions (Steps 1-4).
- 3.3 Schools are required to identify and collaborate with relevant parties, including parents/guardians, SCS office personnel and outside agencies (where necessary), to support and manage the behaviours of students at educational risk.
- 3.4 Where a child or young person is dealing with serious mental health and self-harming behaviours, a case management team of relevant school and SCS office personnel should be convened to consider the support of the young person who is unwell, while at the same time ensuring the duty of care to the wider school community.
- 3.5 Schools must complete and maintain a current risk assessment for the management (and enrolment) of students who exhibit violent behaviour, including controls to mitigate the risk to others in the school community and the student themselves.
- 3.6 Schools should obtain information, as empowered under [Part 5A of the Education Act 1990 \(NSW\)](#), relevant to the assessment and management of risk posed by a student's violent behaviour.
- 3.7 School Principals must report any concerns of extremist or anti-social behaviour to the Team Leader Child Protection in line with the [SCS Deradicalisation of Students Policy](#)

### ▼ 4.0 Procedures

#### 4.1 **Responsibility of Classroom Teacher**

Consideration of a suspension

- 4.1.1 Develop a behaviour management plan to document intervention, at a classroom level, for students with complex social and emotional needs (see Stage 1 of the interventions included in the [guidelines](#)).
- 4.1.2 Participate within a case management team where necessary, for the support of a child or young person with complex social and emotional needs.

#### 4.2 **Responsibility of the school Leadership Team under direction of the Principal**

- 4.2.1 Manage and support students with complex emotional and social needs with reference to the associated [guidelines](#) and staged interventions.
- 4.2.2 Provide support to classroom teachers to assist in the identification of triggers and intervention strategies for students with complex social and emotional needs (see Stage 2 of the interventions included in the [guidelines](#)).
- 4.2.3 Ensure the maintenance of comprehensive documentation of a school's response to managing students with complex social and emotional needs.
- 4.2.4 Collaborate with outside agencies where appropriate, on matters concerning the management of students at educational risk, in compliance with current legislation. Namely, the [Children and Young Persons Care and Protection Act 1998 \(NSW\)](#).
- 4.2.5

Work in conjunction with SCS office personnel, in circumstances where the student's behaviour continues to present serious challenges to safe management within a mainstream educational setting (see Stage 4 of the interventions included in the [guidelines](#)).

- 4.2.6 Bring together a case management team of relevant school and SCS personnel for the support of a child or young person with complex social and emotional needs.

#### 4.3 **Responsibility of SCS Office**

- 4.3.1 Offer professional learning to support schools with skills and strategies to effectively support and manage students at educational risk.
- 4.3.2 Collaborate with school staff to review the current intervention strategies and work with parents/caregivers and external agencies in the hope of improving student outcomes (see Stage 3 of the interventions included in the [guidelines](#)).
- 4.3.3 Work in conjunction with the school Principal, in circumstances where the student's behaviour continues to present serious challenges to safe management within a mainstream educational setting (see Stage 4 of the interventions included in the [guidelines](#)).
- 4.3.4 Participate within a case management team convened for the support of a child or young person with complex social and emotional needs.

#### 4.4 **Responsibility of families/carers:**

- 4.4.1 Collaborate with the school and SCS personnel in the development of strategies and interventions for the improvement of student outcomes.
- 4.4.2 Upon and throughout enrolment, supply the school with information relevant to the student's behaviour from previous schools or other relevant agencies, to enable the effective assessment and management of risk.

## ▼ 5.0 Bases of Discretion

At all points of intervention the discretion of the Principal, in consultation with relevant SCS personnel, will be guided by the best interests of the student and the school community.

## ▼ 6.0 Explanatory Notes and Definitions

### 6.1 **Complex Social and Emotional Needs**

Students with complex social and emotional needs are understood as having multiple issues in their lives which may include psychological, developmental, cognitive, physical, social, behavioural, medical or/and family challenges.

### 6.2 **Wellbeing**

A student's level of satisfaction about their quality of life at school. Optimal wellbeing is characterised by positive feelings and attitude, positive relationships with other students and teachers, resilience, and satisfaction with self and learning experiences at school (Noble, McGrath, Roffey and Rowling 2008).

### 6.3 **Educational Risk**

Students who are not achieving to their academic, social and emotional capacity, and are consequently vulnerable to disengaging or leaving school prematurely.

### 6.4 **Pastoral Care**

The overall climate of care that exists within a school. It includes the policies, processes, programs and practices delivered at school level with the purpose of supporting and enhancing the wellbeing of students.

### 6.5 Targeted Intervention

Planned process or action aimed at addressing the individual needs of a student.

### 6.6 Case Management Team

A group of school and often regional/central office staff who meet collaboratively to assess, plan, facilitate and coordinate the management of a student's needs at school. External service providers may be engaged and consulted, as required.

### 6.7 Risk Assessment

The systematic process of evaluating the potential risk of harm that is posed to a student, staff member or the wider school community.

### 6.8 Individual Positive Behaviour Plan (IPBP)

The purpose of an IPBP is for the school and the student's family (wherever possible), to jointly plan a response that addresses the specific needs of a child. The concept of a positive approach is to assist students to repair damaged relationships and learn appropriate skills to help them avoid similar issues in the future, re-establish them as effective learners, and restore the student to good standing within the broader school community. A sample IPBP is contained in the [Supporting Students with Complex Social and Emotional Needs Guidelines](#).

## ▼ 7.0 Supporting Documents

### 7.1 Related policies

- [Student Wellbeing and Pastoral Care Policy](#)
- [Student Management: Suspension, Transfer and Exclusion Policy](#)
- [Enrolment Policy for Systemic Catholic Schools](#)
- [Deradicalisation of Students Policy](#)

### 7.2 Supporting documents

- [Supporting Students with Complex Social and Emotional Needs Guidelines \(internal\)](#)
- [Children and Young Persons \(Care and Protection\) Act 1998](#)
- [Education Act 1990 - NSW](#)
- [Disability Standards for Education \(2005, 2011\)](#)
- [The Commonwealth Privacy Act 1988 \(Cth\)](#)

## ▼ 8.0 Appendices

Nil

## ▼ 9.0 Classification

9.1 **Policy Number:** TL201602-2.0

9.2 **Version:** 2.0

**Last modified:** June 2017

This policy supersedes all previous policies relating to matters contained therein. In so much as any aspect of this policy may appear to be in conflict with another Archdiocesan system or school-based policy, then precedence is to be given to this policy.

9.3 **Audience:** Public

9.4 **Review by:** October 2018

9.5 **Approved by Leadership Team:** November 3, 2016

9.6 **Endorsed by SACS Board:** November 30, 2016

9.7 **Approved by Executive Director of Sydney Catholic Schools:** 7 December 2016

9.8 **Commencement Date:** 1 January 2017

## Related Policies

- [Student Wellbeing and Pastoral Care Policy](#)
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