

DISCIPLINE POLICY

Purpose

Zeal Futures Secondary School (the School) will have in place disciplinary procedures based on the principles of procedural fairness and aim to deal with disciplinary matters quickly and effectively to ensure a positive and productive learning environment is maintained for all students and staff.

This policy is applicable to all school staff and students.

Policy

Zeal Futures Secondary School will always adhere to the principals of Procedural Fairness when dealing with any disciplinary matters. NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA) defines Procedural Fairness as:

- A basic right of all when dealing with authorities. Procedural fairness refers to what are sometimes described as the 'hearing rule' and the right to an 'unbiased decision';
- The 'hearing rule' includes the right of the person against whom an allegation has been made to:
 - know the allegations related to a specific matter and any other information which will be taken into account in consideration of the matter
 - know the process by which the matter will be considered
 - respond to the allegations
 - know how to seek a review of the decision made in response to the allegations.
- The 'right to an unbiased decision' includes the right to:
 - impartiality in investigation and decision-making
 - an absence of bias by a decision-maker.

Zeal Futures Secondary School believes all students have the right to a second chance, and all dealings with students in terms of disciplinary matters will be done so within a framework of understanding the special nature of our student cohort – that is, understanding we assist many young people from highly disadvantaged backgrounds, for whom previous educational experiences have in many cases been negative.

Positive Discipline

Zeal Futures Secondary School aims to conduct all student interactions within a strengths-based framework. This approach can also affect how we handle student discipline. There are several ways the School practices positive behaviour:

- the awarding of "merit tickets" in response to on-time class attendance and positive behaviours which are drawn weekly with low cost prizes issued as rewards
- teachers actively providing positive feedback on a regular basis to deserving students
- formal school ceremonies where "effort" awards are issued alongside "academic achievement" awards
- ad-hoc Principal's Award Certificates being issued to recognise student achievement across a range of domains including academic, participation and effort

The School leadership team will implement an electronic student management database to allow teachers the ability to register positive rewards and recognitions in real time. This is another way we can encourage positive behaviours through timely and regular positive reinforcement.

General Information

Students are required to follow all reasonable instructions from teachers and staff, and any other people with authority delegated by the School, for example senior staff of Zeal Futures Secondary School. Where a student disregards rules, disobeys instructions or otherwise engages in conduct which causes or may cause harm, damage to property, inconvenience or reputational damage to the School, staff members or other students, or acts contrary to the Zeal Futures Secondary School Student Code of Conduct, the student may be subject to disciplinary action.

The disciplinary procedures undertaken by the School vary according to the seriousness of the alleged offence. Where the allegation, if proved, may result in suspension or expulsion, the student and parents will be informed of the allegations and procedural steps to be followed in dealing with the matter. In relation to all matters to be investigated, students will be informed of the nature of the allegation and given an opportunity to respond to the allegations.

The penalties imposed will vary according to the behaviour and the prior record of the student. At the lower end of the spectrum, a counselling meeting may be appropriate. At the upper end, the behaviour could result in suspension or expulsion.

The School strictly prohibits the use of corporal punishment in disciplining students attending our school.

The School does not explicitly or implicitly sanction the administering of corporal punishment by non-school persons, including parents, carers or guardians, to enforce discipline. The use of any form of corporal punishment perpetrated by any stakeholder of the school community is strictly and unreservedly prohibited. School staff will take appropriate action to report any such behaviour with guidance from the Zeal Futures Secondary School Child Protection Policy.

Procedural Fairness

Where the offending behaviour is of such a nature it may result in suspension or expulsion, the student will be:

- informed of the alleged infringement;
- informed as to who will make the decision on the penalty;
- informed of the procedures to be followed and
- afforded a right of review and appeal.

The Principal will reach a preliminary decision in relation to the allegation and any proposed penalty and advise the student (and parent/s or carer/s) of the view. The student (and parent/s or carer/s) would be advised that if they wish this preliminary decision to be reviewed, they may make application for a review to the Principal and submit any information they want to be considered during the review process. The Principal will then either confirm the preliminary decision as a final decision or amend the preliminary decision based on the additional information provided.

Suspensions, Exclusions and Expulsions

Definitions:

- Suspension:** A short period of time where the student is not allowed to participate in school activity, served either on or off campus, usually between 1 to 3 days in duration.
- Exclusion:** A longer period of off-campus exclusion where the student is not allowed to participate in any school activity.
- Expulsion:** The most serious and final measure in terms of negative discipline in response to a serious breach of the student code of conduct

The following situation could constitute grounds for a Student's Suspension from the school:

- Example 1: bullying of other students resulting in suspension of 1 - 3 days;
- Example 2: bringing a knife to school resulting in suspension of 1 - 3 days;
- Example 3: continued contraventions of the student code of conduct resulting in suspension of 1 - 3 days

The following situation would constitute grounds for a Student's Exclusion from the school:

- Example 1: where a student has a temporary behavioural issue, for example due to a change in medication causing inappropriate behaviour or;
- Example 2: where there is a peer relations issue that requires students to be separated for a short period to allow the issue to be resolved or;
- Example 3: where immediate action has to be taken to remove the student from the school pending an investigation and preliminary decision regarding further action.

The following situation could constitute grounds for a Student's Expulsion from the school:

- Example 1: continued threatening or actual aggression to a staff member or student or;
- Example 2: using or supplying illicit drugs to other students or;
- Example 3: continuous and serious contraventions of the student code of conduct.

Appeals and Right to an Unbiased Decision

Appeals are made by contacting the Principal to arrange for a meeting between the student and their support people or family. During the appeal process, the student has an opportunity to state their case and request a review of the decision.

If the student believes the decision about the appeal has been biased and an independent arbiter is required, a request can be made for a meeting with the Chief Executive Officer who will make a final decision.

Related Documents

- Student Code of Conduct Policy (POL037)
- Harassment, Discrimination and Anti Bullying Policy – (POL018)
- Complaints Policy and Procedure (POL023)
- Child Protection Policy (POL021)
- Student Supervision Policy (POL038)
- Education Act NSW (1990)
- Education Regulation NSW (2017)
- NSW Registered and Accredited Individual Non-government Schools Manual NSW Education Standards Authority September 2023

Approved by Zeal Futures Learning Board of Directors: 19th February 2026

All applicable legislative requirements have been thoroughly reviewed and integrated into the development of this policy. These legal provisions are systematically reassessed and incorporated during each policy review to ensure ongoing compliance.

Document History

Version	Prepared By	Approved By	Date	Description
1.0	D. Laarkamp	Board of Directors	19.02.2026	Initial creation