

NSW Department of Education

## Policy Library

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**Last updated**  
30/01/2024

### Policy documents

- [Behaviour code for students](#)
- [Detention and time-out procedures](#)
- [Suspension and expulsion procedures](#)
- [School behaviour support and management plan](#)

### Related information

- [Guidelines for behaviour management decisions made under the previous policy and procedures \(DOCX 224 KB\)](#)
- [Student behaviour policy - easy read version \(PDF 2974 KB\)](#)

**Implementation date**  
08/05/2006

**Reference number**  
PD-2006-0316-V05.0.0

**Publicly available**  
Yes

**Policy cluster**  
Student support and management

## Student behaviour

Direction and guidance on supporting and managing safe, responsible and respectful student behaviour in NSW public schools.

### Audience

All NSW public schools (excluding preschools).

Student behaviour includes behaviour that occurs:

- at school
- on the way to and from school
- on school endorsed activities that are off-site
- outside school hours and off school premises where there is a clear and close connection between the school and students' conduct
- when using social media, mobile devices and/or other technology involving another student or staff member, where there is a clear and close connection between the school and students' conduct.

### [Changes since previous update](#)

Version	Date	Description of changes	Approved by
V05.0.0	30/01/2024	Under the 2023 Policy and procedure review program, updated to reflect the department's focus on positive behaviour approaches, safe practices and inclusive education. Clarifies definitions and expectations for students and staff. Added definition of bullying and wording to reflect the consolidation of the Bullying of Students - Prevention and Response policy into the Student behaviour policy.	Deputy Secretary, Learning Improvement

### Document history

2023 Sep 13 - updated policy statement and implementation documents, Detention and Time-Out Guidelines , School Behaviour Support and Management Plan guide and Student Behaviour Procedures Kindergarten to Year 12 to repair hyperlinks.

2023 Apr 21 - removed link to related document Student Behaviour Strategy as the document is no longer in use.

2022 Oct 10 - updated the policy statement, changing its name from 'Student Discipline in Government Schools' to 'Student Behaviour'. The updated policy emphasises practices to promote positive behaviour in schools. It focuses on supporting students across the care-continuum through a strategic, integrated, whole-school approach. It aims to strengthen the system of support for students and staff to create respectful learning and working environments that promote engagement and wellbeing. Supporting documents have been updated and strengthened to help schools implement the updated policy.

The changes will affect the way principals and school staff manage student behaviour, including important changes in the procedures

- new grounds for suspension
- removal of 'short' and 'long' suspension categories
- introducing maximum consecutive and annual days of suspension, which are different for students in Years K to 2 and 3 to 12
- increased role for Directors, Educational Leadership, including in approving fourth or more suspensions and co-approving expulsions
- introducing a 50 school day time limit for formal cautions
- replacing local school discipline policy with the School Behaviour Support and Management Plan.

The following implementation documents were updated:

- Guidelines for the use of Time-out Strategies Including Dedicated Time-out Rooms updated and name changed to Detention and Time-Out Guidelines
- Student Discipline in Government Schools Support materials updated and name changed to School Behaviour Support and Management Plan guide
- Suspension and Expulsion of School Students Procedures updated and name changed to Student Behaviour Procedures Kindergarten to Year 12

The 'Guidelines for behaviour management decisions made under previous policy and procedures' was added as an implementation document.

The following implementation documents were removed:

- Checklist long suspension
- Checklist short suspension
- Suspension and Expulsion of School Students Procedures Information for Parents.

2019 Aug 22 - Updated contact details made to policy statement and implementation documents.

2018 Sept - Hyperlink for Bullying of Students Prevention and Response Policy updated.

### Superseded documents

Good Discipline and Effective Learning: Ministerial Statement, 1995

## 1. Policy statement

- 1.1 NSW Government schools embed positive behaviour approaches, safe practices and inclusive education. Schools implement inclusive and positive student behaviour support and management approaches aligned to the care continuum that establish support and maintain high expectations for student behaviour, in line with the ([Behaviour code for students](#)).
- 1.2 The department rejects all forms of bullying behaviour including online (or cyber) bullying.
- 1.3 Schools develop behaviour support and management plans, including anti-bullying strategies, that prioritise continuity of learning and facilitate whole-school, prevention-focused and positive approaches to behaviour support, to meet the needs of all students.
- 1.4 Promoting positive behaviour requires schools to access support as early as possible and for system-level support to be proactive and responsive to schools' needs.
- 1.5 Some circumstances exist where more intensive and persistent behaviour management interventions are necessary to respond to, manage and address behaviour or behaviours of concern. These may include the following:
  - 1.5.1 Detention and timeout are planned interventions to allow students opportunities to reflect on and regulate emotions and behaviour.
  - 1.5.2 Formal cautions provide an opportunity for the student and their parents or carers to understand the impact of the student's behaviour or behaviours of concern and to engage in positive behaviour supports and strategies to address the behaviour or behaviours. See the [Suspension and expulsion procedures](#).
  - 1.5.3 Suspension can be a critical safeguard that principals may use as a behaviour management intervention when a behaviour or behaviours of concern pose an unacceptable risk to others or to teaching and learning. The purpose of suspension is to allow the school to implement appropriate supports to address the student's complex and challenging behaviour or behaviours, mitigate any unacceptable risks to students and staff and enable the student's return as soon as is appropriate. See the [Suspension and expulsion procedures](#).
  - 1.5.4 In the most serious of circumstances, where behaviour management interventions including suspension and other risk management strategies have not been successful in managing serious behaviour or behaviours of concern, expulsion is an option available to schools. The gravity of the circumstances requires that particular emphasis be given to procedural fairness. See the [Suspension and expulsion procedures](#).
- 1.6 Behaviour support and management interventions are implemented in line with the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers and the Disability Standards for Education in that they must be fair, equitable, inclusive and proportionate, and take into consideration the diverse learning and wellbeing needs of students, including developmental age, trauma, child protection concerns, cultural considerations, disability and individual needs and circumstances.
- 1.7 Procedural fairness will be afforded to all students and staff in implementing this policy (see [Legal Issues Bulletin 3 Procedural fairness](#)).

## 2. Context

- 2.1 All children and young people have a right to an education where students can access and fully participate in learning.
- 2.2 Schools are calm and safe environments that support teaching and learning. Supporting positive student behaviour is essential for quality learning, as well as the wellbeing and safety of all students and staff.
- 2.3 All students and staff have the right to be treated fairly and with dignity, both online and offline, in an environment free from intimidation, violence, harassment, victimisation and discrimination, including that based on sex, race, religion, disability or sexual orientation.
- 2.4 A behaviour of concern is challenging, complex or unsafe behaviour that requires more persistent and intensive interventions. A behaviour of concern does not include low-level, developmentally appropriate behaviour.
- 2.5 Bullying behaviour involves the intentional misuse of power in a relationship, is ongoing and repeated, and involves behaviour that can cause harm.
- 2.6 Principals, teachers and school staff acting in accordance with this policy (and related implementation documents) are acting with the authority of, and are supported by, the department.

## 3. Policy contact

- 3.1 Leader, Behaviour Services  
02 7814 3809  
[studentbehaviour@det.nsw.edu.au](mailto:studentbehaviour@det.nsw.edu.au)

## 4. Monitoring the policy

- 4.1 The Director, Behaviour and Student Participation, monitors the implementation of this policy, regularly reviews its contents to ensure relevance and accuracy, and updates it as needed.



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