

Saint Mary MacKillop College Albury

Discipline Policy

Updated March 2025



Overview

The pastoral life of the college is based on the active and sensitive involvement of all staff and seeks to build a vital Christian community in which all individuals feel involved, appreciated and supported. To this end discipline practices are firmly linked with pastoral care. Members of staff with particular responsibility for student wellbeing include primary class teachers and high school homeroom teachers, who are supported by the Primary, High School and Wellbeing Coordinators. If required, the school may consult the school Police Liaison. Wellbeing staff seek to promote respectful, safe and healthy environments in which students can prosper. Thus pastoral care at Saint Mary MacKillop College Albury ensures that disciplinary measures are not used merely as punitive outcomes, but also as opportunities to encourage growth and responsibility.

Students' Rights and Responsibilities

At SMMC students adopt shared rights and responsibilities that are a reflection of the School's culture and ethos.

Students' expectations	Students' responsibilities
1. I expect to be taught in a Catholic environment – one that allows me to develop a genuine spiritual life that embodies the joy, compassion and hope of an active Christian faith. I expect to be given the necessary instruction in the Catholic faith to be able to defend the faith if necessary.	1. I have the responsibility to respect the values and traditions of the Catholic faith and be open to the development of my faith through liturgies, retreats, prayer and religious education lessons. I have the responsibility to ensure that I adhere to the commandments and precepts as set down by the Catholic Church to the limits to which my particular situation allows.
2. I expect the right to be happy and to be treated with compassion. This means being able to move about the College without being pushed, threatened, or mocked in any way.	2. I have a responsibility to see that I do not push, threaten or in any way mock other people in our College. I also have the responsibility to make sure that all members of our College community are safe and are treated with respect.
3. I have the right to expect my property to be safe within the College.	3. I have the responsibility to ensure that I do not damage, steal or destroy others' property and that I take responsibility for my own property.
4. I expect that our College environment will be free from noise or litter pollution.	4. It is my responsibility to treat our College environment with respect and that I do not contribute to any kind of litter or noise pollution.
5. I expect that I will be able to learn without interference or distraction from other students.	5. It is my responsibility to see that I do not interfere with or distract other students from their work.

6. I expect to be taught by teachers who are fair, competent and sympathetic to my needs.	6. It is my responsibility to co-operate and comply with the instructions of staff.
7. I expect to learn in an environment that is supportive of my individual talents.	7. I have the responsibility to develop my talents to the best of my ability in all areas of College life.
8. I expect to be valued as a student at this College.	8. I have the responsibility to develop and uphold the good name of the College by my words, actions and appearance and to behave at all times in a manner that will bring credit to the College.

Behaviour Management

SMMC implements a set of School Rules that summarise the expectations of student conduct, which are to be displayed prominently in each classroom. They are summarised as follows:

Card one: At Saint Mary MacKillop College Albury We... Respect ourselves, Respect Others and Respect our Environment.

Card Two: Consequences Flow Chart. 1. Warning 2. Relocate within the classroom 3. Time Out within the Classroom/Yard 4. Exit From The Classroom or Yard and Behaviour Sheet. Parents Notified

5. Principal

Card Three: Keep hands, feet and objects to ourselves

Card Four: Speak appropriately

Card Five: Follow Directions

Card Six: Take Care of All Property (yours, mine and ours)

Card Seven: Listen to the Speaker

Card Eight: Move safely

When things go wrong or someone has been hurt the school will utilise the restorative reflection sheet to assist in discipline. A lunchtime detention may be given to a student in Year 3-12 who persistently fails to comply with instructions. In this case, parents are notified and a reflection sheet is completed by the student and signed by a parent. Primary-aged students may be given a behaviour tracker which the class teacher uses to provide feedback on the student's behaviour.

Suspension, Expulsion and Exclusion

Ensuring the safety, welfare and flourishing of all students is the first priority of SMMC staff. Taking prompt, remedial steps to assist a student experiencing difficulty is a distinguishing feature of the SMMC pastoral approach, which is in keeping with the ethos of the College and helps to limit the occasions when suspension or expulsion may be contemplated.

Suspension involves the temporary removal of a student from all classes for a period of time; expulsion is the permanent removal of a student from the roll; and exclusion prevents a student from accessing a system of schools. Since SMMC is an independent school that is not part of a broader system of schools, exclusion does not apply.

Suspension and expulsion are exceedingly rare disciplinary measures. Nonetheless, even in a school such as SMMC, it is important that authoritative policy and transparent procedures are known and, if required, can be activated with confidence.

In the case of a serious breach of discipline, the Principal or delegate investigates the matter applying the principles of procedural fairness. Where a student's misbehaviour is judged to be of a very serious nature, suspension and/or expulsion may be used as sanctions.

Suspension allows school personnel to prepare appropriate support and assist with re-entry of a student. Suspension also allows for the student to reflect on their own behaviour. It may be done immediately for violent, disrespectful or aggressive behaviour especially if it impacts on the safety of other students or staff members. Suspensions may be whole days, or part days to allow the student to gradually ease back into normal classroom routine. Generally suspensions would be for up to four days. A meeting involving the Principal, student and parents is held prior to the student's return to school to discuss clear expectations for the student in the future. An independent support person is always welcome to attend interviews and disciplinary meetings. A long suspension of up to 20 days may be considered in exceptional circumstances.

Expulsion may be a consequence of a serious act of misbehaviour such as violence or possession of illegal substances. This would only occur in very rare instances when all other options had been exhausted. Generally a student would be put on a suspension until the expulsion has been finalised. Having investigated the matter according to the principles of procedural fairness, the Principal provides written advice to the parents setting out the reasons for the expulsion under consideration. If the expulsion proceeds the parents will be advised in writing. If a student is asked to leave the school, the Principal will assist with the student's entry to another school, in order that he/she has the chance to make a fresh start.

Procedural fairness

SMMC is committed to acting with procedural fairness when investigating and deciding on allegations of a serious disciplinary nature. (Note that allegations of reportable conduct are addressed in accordance with the College Child Protection Policy.) Procedural fairness is underpinned by the application of two principles: "the hearing rule" and "the right to an unbiased decision".

The application of the hearing rule means that someone who is the subject of an allegation has the right to:

- Know the allegations related to a specific matter and any other information which will be taken into account in considering matter;
- Know the process by which the matter will be considered;
- Respond to the allegations; and

- 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 an investigation and decision-making; and
- An absence of bias by a decision-maker.

The application of these two principles means that those investigating a matter will act fairly, in good faith, without bias and exercise discerning judgement. In order to respond fairly and justly to concerns of a disciplinary nature, it should be noted that the College may also act in accordance with these principles in matters that do not necessarily result in suspension or expulsion.

Parents may request a review of decisions made under the College Discipline Policy by writing to the Principal or Chairman of the College Board, as appropriate. Guidelines for requesting a review are set out in the College Complaints Handling Policy, which is accessible via the SMMC website.

Corporal Punishment

The use of corporal punishment is forbidden by law in the state of NSW and falls completely outside the philosophy and practice of Saint Mary MacKillop College Albury. It must never be employed by any member of staff or other person operating in any capacity on behalf of the college. The College does not sanction the administering of corporal punishment by non-school persons, including parents, to enforce discipline at the school.