VISION STATEMENT:

At St Joseph's we appreciate and value:

- The right of every child to an authentic Catholic education centred on the person of Jesus
- The partnership of parents, parish, Diocese and the wider community
- The responsibility of providing a welcoming secure and happy environment which is conducive to learning
- The gifts and talents of all within the school community
- Our responsibility to provide multiplicity of experiences which will allow the children to make a life-long contribution to the wider community

RATIONALE

- The St Joseph's school community of Dungog endeavours to articulate and model a process of Pastoral Care in keeping with the Gospel values based on the teachings of Jesus Christ.

- We aspire towards a school where all participants take responsibility for their own behaviour rather than re-locating blame or outside fault finding.

- We work towards interdependence, where we can trust and rely on each other to build positive relationships and support each other’s strengths and insecurities.

- We are determined to teach and model the dignity and uniqueness of the individual, made in the image of God.

- We recognise that Pastoral Care is entrusted to all members of the school community and reflects the values of compassion, tolerance, forgiveness, reconciliation and justice; seeing these as strengths.

- We believe the family is the foundation of the children's values and behaviour and so encourage close links between the home & school in the development of these values.
OUTCOMES

The school community aims to develop in its members a sense of self worth, accountability and responsibility by:

- Developing and supporting quality relationships
- Incorporating formation in self discipline and choice theory into our approaches to teaching and learning
- Building a Christian climate from which emanates an environment of trust, forgiveness, and an acceptance of others
- Promoting and developing a positive work ethic – emphasizing both effort and positive relationships
- Looking for the good in those in our community
- Encouraging an awareness of the importance of evaluating one's own behaviour related to their idea of a ‘perfect school’
- Seeking out and supporting ‘at risk’ students, staff or families in our school.
- Supporting children and their families during times of change and / or grief in their lives - (Seasons programme, School Counsellor, etc)
- Working through a process involving / exploring “better choices” with regard to issues of misbehaviour, bullying, attention seeking, etc
- Seeking support from the CSO Student Support Unit or other external agencies when required
- Clearly adhering to the concept of procedural fairness when dealing with serious inappropriate behaviour (suspension / expulsion)
IMPLEMENTATION

Personnel / Procedure:

- Teachers are responsible for planning their class work to include formation in self-discipline and decision making

- Children participate in an orientation programme before beginning Kindergarten and Year 7. Transition to Dungog High School and St Peter's, Maitland.

- Staff reflect regularly on the school climate and evaluate our needs. Areas to evaluate include:
  
  - relationships
  - children at risk
  - parent programmes
  - structures, policies, procedures and practices (do they reflect our school vision?)
  - teaching and learning
  - approaches to discipline
  - supporting family / school relationship
  - OH&S

- Teachers under no circumstances are to use corporal punishment within our school and system (Education Reform Act 1995).

- Corporal punishment by parents to support school discipline is also prohibited.

- Parents are always welcome and to be welcomed by staff

- That the ‘Servant Leadership’ model be promoted in our school community to develop acceptance, justice and service to others

- Parents take responsibility for the needs of their school and be assisted by staff to participate (refer school handbook)

- At risk children / families to be given special attention and support by teachers who maintain close communication with the Principal (eg. With regard to misbehaviour, bullying, attention seeking, anxiety etc.)

- Teachers maintain vigilance in responding to “at risk” children so that either internal or if necessary external support can be organised.

- A staff member be appointed to the position of Harassment Officer

- Children with special health needs will be listed in Staff room, Canteen & classrooms with individual action plans (e.g. Diabetes, Anaphylactic reactions etc).

- Where serious inappropriate behaviour occurs, a number of steps will be taken by the Principal before suspension / expulsion occurs. (As per Diocesan Pastoral Care Suspension / Expulsion Policy)

  N.B. In extreme cases immediate suspension/expulsion may be appropriate.
Resources / Assessments

- Children with special needs (short & long term) will be given appropriate programme support following discussion with Principal / LST and if necessary in consultation with the Special Education Consultant

- Teachers should keep anecdotal records for any child exhibiting ‘at risk’ behaviour on a regular basis

- Professional development of staff should be ongoing

BUDGET

The school prioritises expenditure in this area with funding from the following sources:
- Specific grants from the P & F
- School funds
- Local community donations

EVALUATION

This policy will be evaluated periodically. The staff will evaluate the policy by completing a pro forma incorporating the following four questions.

1) Do rationale / aims continue to reflect school and community needs?

2) Is this policy still an accurate record of the teaching/learning process?

3) What areas of the policy need updating?

4) Do we need additional resources to implement the policy?
Support Material - Bullying

**BULLYING**
What is bullying?

Bullying is repetitive and continuous acts of aggression causing embarrassment, pain or discomfort to another.

- It can take various forms: physical, verbal, gesture, extortion or exclusion.
- It is an abuse of power.
- It is usually planned and organised.
- Individuals or groups may be involved.

Examples:
- Any form of physical violence
- Stealing, hiding, damaging or destroying property
- Using offensive names, continuous teasing, spreading rumours, using put-downs, belittling others abilities and achievements.
- Degrading one’s culture, social background or appearance.
- Hurtfully and repeatedly excluding others from the group.
- Forcing others to act against their will.

Support Material - Suspension / Expulsion

**SUSPENSION**

Suspension means a temporary withdrawal of a student’s right to participate in and attendance at regular school activities. This may take the form of short or long suspension.

In normal circumstances suspension is subject to the following guidelines, however, it is recognised that on occasions an immediate suspension may have to be imposed.

Prior to any suspension (other than immediate suspension), the following requirements need to have taken place:

- Discussion has occurred, prior to suspension, with the student and parent / caregiver regarding specific unacceptable behaviour and resolution strategies outlined.
- Factual records of all discussions and actions have been taken

**Immediate Suspension**

In some circumstances the Principal may determine that a student should be suspended immediately. This will usually be due to reasons such as

- the safety of students or staff because of violence, threats of violence,
- the presence of knives and / or other weapons or
- the presence of illegal drugs
The following steps relate to suspension.

- The decision to suspend must be taken by the Principal, or in the Principal’s absence, the Executive members of staff.

- The Principal must inform the student of the precise grounds on which suspension is being considered. The student must be given the opportunity to respond. The student’s response must be considered before a decision to suspend is made.

(See Diocesan Suspension Policy)

**EXPULSION**

**Expulsion** is a sanction to be applied as a last resort when other disciplinary measures, including suspension, have not produced a satisfactory outcome. In deciding to expel a student, careful consideration must be given to the welfare of the student and to the overall good and / or safety of the school community. In very limited circumstances of the most serious kind, an immediate expulsion may have to be imposed.

The Principal should ensure, except as a result of a most serious incident, that all appropriate welfare strategies and discipline options have been implemented and documented, prior to expelling a student from the school because of misbehaviour.

**Deciding on and Notifying an Expulsion**

The following steps should be taken in relation to the expulsion of a student.

**Decision**

- The decision to expel must only be made by the Principal in consultation with a CSO Assistant Director and Parish Priest if available.

- The student must be given the opportunity to respond. The student’s response must be considered before a decision to expel is made.

- The Principal will explore enrolment alternatives with the Catholic Schools Office Consultant prior to finalising the expulsion.
Notification
Having reached a decision to expel a student from the school, the following steps must be put in place:

- A student will not be sent out of the school before the end of the school day without notification being made to the parent / caregiver, and if necessary, agreement reached about arrangements for the collection of the student from school.

- Notification of expulsion must be made to parents / caregivers in writing. In all cases, the notification must include:
  - Notice of the expulsion. This formal advice should also state the student's/parents' right to appeal the decision and the appropriate procedures for submitting an appeal.
  - The reason for expulsion

- The Principal must inform relevant/appropriate staff, the school's Consultant and where warranted, the student's Parish Priest.

- Documentation of all steps involved and record of any interview/correspondence must be completed.

- Having completed the action outlined above, the Principal must forward a copy of all documentation related to the incident and subsequent expulsion to the director of Schools, Catholic Schools Office.

PROCEDURAL FAIRNESS

Procedural fairness is a basic right of all individuals dealing with authorities.

Procedural Fairness is generally recognised as having two essential elements:

1. The right to be heard which includes:
   - The right to know why the action is happening
   - The right to know the way in which the issues will be determined
   - The right to know the allegations in the matter and any other information which will be taken into account
   - The right of the person against whom the allegations have been made to respond to the allegations
   - The right to an appeal

2. The right of a person to an impartial decision which includes:
   - The right of impartiality in the investigation and decision making phases
   - The right to an absence of bias in the decision maker
RIGHT OF APPEAL PROCESS

Students and parents / caregivers who consider that correct procedures have not been followed, or that an unfair decision has been made, may appeal.

- The student's parents have a right to appeal against a notification of expulsion within five working days of the action.

- This appeal is made in writing to the Director of Schools stating the grounds on which the appeal is being made.

- In hearing an appeal, the Director of Schools will be assisted by a Principal and a school Counsellor.

- Following an unsuccessful appeal, the student's parents have the right of appeal to the Bishop of the Maitland-Newcastle Diocese within thirty days. The Bishop or his appointee may appoint an appropriate person to hear appeals.