Suspension centres: guidelines for establishment and operation

Definition

A suspension centre provides an intervention for students on long suspension who have been identified by their school as likely to benefit from a structured program to assist with a successful return to their school as soon as possible.

Purpose

Suspension centres will:

- form part of a range of behaviour support services for students with disruptive behaviours, such as school learning and support team interventions, individual planning, learning and support teacher interventions and/or Assistant Principal, Learning and Support interventions
- increase the capacity of schools to deal successfully with disruptive student behaviour
- assist students to make a successful re-entry to their census school.

General operational principles

The suspension centre:

- will be established and managed under the auspices of the local School Services executive
- model will be determined according to local needs
- students will remain the responsibility of the census school and strong links will be maintained throughout the period of attendance at the suspension centre
- expectations will mirror the census school expectations
- length of stay will be no more than twenty school days
- students will be referred back to their census school principal if their behaviour is such that it threatens the safety of other students, or is seriously disruptive whilst they are in the centre.

Goals

The goals of the centre will be to:

- assist students to reflect on and understand their behaviour and its consequences
- reinforce and develop appropriate attitudes and behaviours
• build capacity and understanding of students in how to re-engage at school, re-integrate positive work habits and prevent recurrence of inappropriate behaviours
• provide skill development opportunities and support for the parents/carers of students
• provide professional development opportunities and support for census school staff.

Target population

Students who:
• have been placed on long suspension
• are assessed by the census school as having the potential to benefit from a structured intervention to assist them to successfully return to their school following a long suspension.

Facility

• The program locations are determined by each operational directorate based on local need.
• The maximum number of students in a suspension centre program at any one time is six.

Operational guidelines

Referral and attendance
• As part of the suspension resolution process, students will be nominated by the census school principal to participate in the suspension centre program.
• Prior to students attending the centre a risk assessment must be coordinated by the principal of the census school, in liaison with the head teacher of the suspension centre.
• Entry into the suspension centre must be preceded by an interview with the parents/carers of the student and the completion of a suspension report by the school counsellor/psychologist.
• The suspension report should focus on information that will inform intervention strategies such as key relationships and supports for the student.
• The expectations and role of the suspension centre, the student and parents/carers will be clearly communicated to all parties by the census school principal.
• The census school retains responsibility for the student and for managing the suspension process.
• Attendance and progress reports will be provided to the census school by the centre.
• The principal of the census school must convene a suspension resolution meeting within five days of the student commencing at the centre as per Suspension and Expulsion of School Students – Procedures.
In accordance with Student Attendance in Government Schools: Procedures:

- The attendance register at the census school will be marked as ‘E’ for the period that the student is not attending the census school during the long suspension period (for a maximum of 20 school days).
- The head teacher of the suspension centre will complete the Special Circumstance Register for the period of time that the student attends the suspension centre.
- At the conclusion of the period of time that the student spends at the suspension centre, the head teacher will forward a copy of the Special Circumstances Register to the census school.
- The census school will insert a comment in the attendance register (roll) that the student has been attending the suspension centre.

Management

- School Services will establish a management committee chaired by a principal with representation from relevant departmental, school and community groups.
- The committee will develop an implementation plan and oversee the management of resources, including funding.
- The principal of the managing school (if different from the chairperson) will attend the management committee meetings.
- The principal of the managing school is responsible for ensuring that the head teacher of the suspension centre has appropriate response plans and support in place in the event of a serious incident.

Resourcing

- The managing school will receive funding to support the establishment and operation of the suspension centre.
- The head teacher position will be established at the managing school.

Staffing

- The teacher appointed to the centre will have experience in teaching students with disruptive behaviours.
- The teacher managing the centre will be substantively appointed as a head teacher for a period of two years. If the centre relocates at the end of this period and the teacher does not wish to relocate with the centre, the teacher will have nominated transfer status at head teacher level or equivalent.
- A school learning support officer must be employed at the centre whenever the structured program is operating.
Program

- The census school will remain responsible for the management of the student and for the provision of the learning program.

Transition

- The student will be linked to a mentor teacher while in the suspension centre program.
- The mentor teacher will support the student’s return to the census school.
- Students returning to school after suspension will be supported through the continuum of available support services including mentoring and school counsellor/psychologist support.

Location map of suspension centres
Location of 22 suspension centres

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<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Location</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Bidwill Campus, Chifley Secondary College</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Evans High School</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Ryde Public School</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Wadalba Community School</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>Ajuga School</td>
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<td>Arncliffe Public School</td>
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<td>Green Square School</td>
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<td>Lomandra School</td>
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<td>Cessnock High School</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>Drummond Memorial Public School</td>
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<td>11</td>
<td>Irrawang High School</td>
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<td>12</td>
<td>The Rivers Secondary College, Lismore Campus</td>
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<td>13</td>
<td>Melville High School</td>
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<td>Parry School</td>
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<td>Albion Park High School</td>
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<td>Anson Street School</td>
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<td>17</td>
<td>Bomaderry High School</td>
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<td>18</td>
<td>Dubbo School of Distance Education</td>
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<td>19</td>
<td>Griffith High School</td>
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<td>20</td>
<td>Mount Austin High School</td>
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<td>21</td>
<td>Batemans Bay High School</td>
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<td>22</td>
<td>Nowra Public School</td>
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