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**‘Hands off’ Rule Policy**

St Patrick’s College has a ‘Hands off’ rule to preserve the dignity, safety and wellbeing of all members of our community. This is the one of the most important safety rules for students to keep in mind in relation to student management. It requires that students keep their hands off others and the property of others. Appropriate physical greetings are not included in this rule.

The College cannot condone violence for any reason instigation and retaliation will not be tolerated.  Those who are found to be engaging in physical conflict such as fighting will be suspended from classes until the matter can be investigated and resolved. This is inclusive of students who instigate a physical altercation/interaction with another student(s) AND those who retaliate. It should be noted that self-defence is defined as the minimum required force to put oneself in a position of safety.

The following forms of behaviour are examples of breaches of the ‘Hands off’ rule:

* Interfering with the property of others (including locker padlocks, school bags, electronic devices and books) without the consent of the owner
* Throwing or flicking objects in the yard or class
* Rumbling (either aggressively or in play)
* Deliberately tripping, pushing, shouldering, shoving or grabbing other students by their clothing or bag
* Fighting, punching, slapping, kicking and wrestling
* Intimate physical contact such as holding hands, hugging and kissing
* Any other physical action that compromises the dignity or safety of others

Teachers have the right to determine what appropriate behaviour is in this regard. Breaches of the ‘Hands off’ rule will be reported to the relevant Year Coordinator or member of the Executive. Incidents will be investigated, ensuring procedural fairness for all parties, including communication with parents/ guardians. Consultation between the Year Coordinator and relevant members of the Executive will occur before a consequence is applied.

The ‘Hands off’ rule applies to all students while they are enrolled in the College. Those students who promote and encourage physical conflict are also in breach of College rules. As individuals, we are all responsible for our actions. Students are encouraged to make positive choices which remove tensions rather than inflame sensitive situations.

The Principal reserves the right, when necessary, to make direct decisions in relation to breaches of the ‘Hands off’ rule and has the final decision in relation to all student management matters.