



## **DISCIPLINE POLICY**

The school's policy relating to discipline is based on principles of procedural fairness and does not permit corporal punishment. (as per The Education Training and Reform Act (2006))

The school believes in a non-punishment system, which relies on the group and open communication rather than on the power of the teacher. Such a system relies on the teachers' and parents' ability to focus discussions and to maintain communication channels. We see negotiation, conflict resolution, mediation and problem solving as essential skills that our students will learn and actively practise. Students will work together, with teachers, to develop ground rules and consequences, while all rules having legal and safety implications will be adults' responsibilities.

The principles of the school's discipline system are clearly communicated to parents on enrolment at the school. The school operates a very open communication policy with the parents, who in turn trust the school to manage student behaviour. If a 'serious' behaviour or disciplinary incident occurs, parents are contacted immediately by telephone and a meeting between staff and parents is scheduled. If the staff feel that there are issues relating to behaviour or discipline that need to be discussed, with parents, again a meeting is scheduled.

The school is concerned about the personal growth of each individual student: helping him or her to develop responsibility in a friendly, caring and orderly environment. This means allowing students to make mistakes, because that is part of being human. Schools should be safe places in which mistakes can be made so that learning can be experienced. If we care about our students, we'll help them to learn from their mistakes by giving them time to reflect on this behaviour and work out ways of behaving differently, and to experience the logical consequences of inappropriate behaviour. At the same time, the discipline system assists teachers in maintaining a non-disruptive environment where all students can learn to the best of their ability.

This approach to discipline is based on a philosophy which promotes respect and care for each person. Each student is to be treated fairly, justly and with understanding, and we encourage students to treat staff members in a similar manner.



Our discipline system seeks to promote self-discipline in our students: we want them to discover that the logical consequences of misbehaviour are that they are the ones who suffer if learning doesn't occur. Our task is to keep reminding students - as calmly as possible -of the logical consequences of what they do.

### Principles of the Discipline System

- Every student has a right to uninterrupted learning at this school, which means that no student has the right to disrupt the learning of others.
- Confidence is to be encouraged throughout the learning process; as such confidence is essential for effective learning to occur. It follows from this that teachers emphasise encouragement and avoid 'put-downs' and sarcasm in their relations with students.
- Each teacher is ultimately responsible for the decisions made in the organisation of students in his/her care. Consequently, the teacher is 'in charge', and students have no right to defy decisions, especially in regard to safety. At the appropriate time, students have the right to question the fairness of a decision and be heard, but not necessarily at the point of its implementation.
- Even though the teacher is always in charge of discipline, students generally learn best, and grow in self-esteem when democratic principles are applied by teachers in learning situations. Such principles include the promotion of mutual trust and respect, the provision of choice, motivation through encouragement, freedom within limits, joint goal- setting, cooperative learning and self-discipline. This approach avoids on the one hand, a permissive style where students do what they want without concern for others, or on the other hand, an autocratic approach which attempts control through reward and punishment, through focusing on weaknesses, or through excessive competition; and which ultimately promotes dependency and/or outright rebellion.
- Some behaviour problems are prevented or limited by effective teaching preparation such as ensuring variety in presentation, providing appropriate levels of work, accommodating individual learning rates, maintaining reasonable consistency in applying discipline measures, learning students' names and in general by acting in ways which have always been and which continue to be consistent with the best teaching practice.
- Student misbehaviour occurs for different motives: the most common being unresolved issues with parents, attention seeking, revenge, a struggle for power



and/or control, and/or a display of inadequacy. These different motives, once recognised, require different discipline strategies.

The eventual aim is always for students to develop and take responsibility for their own learning and behaviour in the school situation. Consequently, the discipline system is not expressed as a complete set of rules with consequences for breaking those rules. Instead, we expect and encourage students to act appropriately in all situations regardless of whether specific rules apply.

The school creates and maintains a safe and positive learning environment which:

- promotes pro-social behaviour and positive social interactions amongst staff and students;
- provides opportunities for students to learn and practise appropriate social behaviours and self discipline; and
- encourages appropriate and fair sanctions for students who display inappropriate behaviours.

The approaches used for the effective management of student behaviour are:

- are preventative in nature;
- promote pro-social behaviour, student wellbeing and the development of self discipline; focus on early intervention; and
- outline procedures for the management of ongoing or serious misbehaviour.

The management of student behaviour is encompassed in the teaching and learning process. The school provides a social context which allows students to be supported whilst also being taught how to accept responsibility for their own behaviour. Students need opportunities to develop appropriate behaviours, self control, and resiliency through interactions with teachers and other staff and through the curriculum; and they need to be reinforced consistently in a manner which enhances their understanding of responsible social behaviour.

The following principles guide the school in the management of all student behaviour:

- Student wellbeing and the prevention of inappropriate behaviour will be enhanced through a focus on early intervention and prevention.
- Student behaviour is best managed in ways that promote restorative practices and are educative in nature.
- All decisions relating to the management of student behaviour and the implementation of policy are made according to the principles of procedural fairness.
- Teacher's behaviour management processes will acknowledge the duty to take reasonable care for the safety of staff and students.



- Student behaviour must not be viewed in isolation but as part of an interaction between the student, staff and the school community. Procedures for Suspension and Expulsion

The school works very closely with staff and parents to ensure that any behavioural issues are dealt with as quickly and effectively as possible. If all attempts at student behaviour management are unsuccessful and further action is required then the following are the procedures that should be followed:

### Suspension

Complete removal from the school community (suspension) may be appropriate for students who, by their actions, refuse to cooperate with discipline measures applied by teachers or who disregard school guidelines. Such instances may include:

- when a student is violent to a person
- threatens the health, safety or well being of any person
- causes damage or destruction of property or is involved in the theft of property possesses, uses, or assists another person to use prohibited drugs or substances
- fails to comply with any reasonable, clearly communicated instruction of a principal, teacher or other staff member
- Consistently:
  - interferes with the wellbeing, safety or educational opportunities of any other student
  - vilifies, defames, degrades or humiliates another person based any personal attribute protected by law.

Suspension will only be used:

- when all other strategies have failed
- for the shortest time necessary.

In such instances, the student may be removed from the school community for a designated period of time, usually two days to a week depending on the severity of the issue, and parents contacted immediately by telephone to arrange a meeting. Police involvement may also be appropriate.

At this meeting the principal provides the student, their parents/guardians and the school council president with a Notice of Suspension containing the:



- summary of outcomes of previous actions that have been undertaken by the school to support the student
- reasons for the suspension
- school days on which the suspension shall occur
- details of the post-suspension student requirements

The principal may suspend a student immediately if the student's behaviour:

- provides the basis for a suspension
- puts at risk the health, safety and wellbeing of themselves, staff or other student

All suspensions will be recorded in the school's Suspension and Expulsion Register, which is maintained by the Principal.

After the suspension period, the following procedure will apply:

The student may only return to school after suspension if accompanied for a meeting with the principal by a parent or guardian. At this meeting, a post-suspension agreement is to be negotiated with the student. This spells out the conditions upon which the student may return to school. Non-negotiable conditions may include being on a Behaviour Plan (including threat of further suspension) for at least a fortnight after returning, and regular meetings with an agreed teacher to discuss progress during this probationary period. Other non-negotiable conditions may include such things as agreeing to visit a professional counsellor, and refraining from the behaviour which led to the suspension. Negotiable areas may include the name of the teacher who meets regularly with the student and various administrative details. After successfully negotiating the probation period, the student can come off the Behaviour Plan and resume classes as normal.

### Expulsion

Expulsion from the school may be appropriate for students who, after all stages of the discipline process have been followed, including Suspension, still continue to act in a way that is unacceptable for the school community. Expulsion is the very last resort. The Principal will inform the student and the parents in writing with a Notice of Expulsion, which will include:

- summary of outcomes of previous actions that have been undertaken by the school to support the student
- reasons for the suspension
- the date from which the expulsion will commence.



Ministerial Order 625-Procedures for Suspension and Expulsion took effect on March 2014.

All records pertaining to student suspension or expulsion will be kept in the student file.

All expulsions will be recorded in the school's Suspension and Expulsion Register, which is maintained by the Principal.

#### Policy Endorsement

This Policy has been endorsed by the FCS Governing Body.

Date: June 2022

Review Date: June 2024

Review Cycle. Every 2 years

Exceptions: This Policy may be reviewed earlier than the date stated subject to circumstance