



Discipline Policy

Behaviour Management

At Aetaomah School it is our task to develop independent, yet socially-aware and skilled future adults.

To do this we employ teachers who have had experience of life and who can draw on this experience to develop worldly-wisdom in the children. Children are naturally drawn to and respond to adults who have experienced the struggles of life and who can, through imagination and with an interest in the well-being of the children pass on this experience and the lessons drawn from it.

The other requirement for teaching at Aetaomah is that one cares deeply about every child and his/her welfare physically and from a soul and spiritual standpoint.

Each of these qualities greatly reduces the need for disciplinary actions.

Should any disciplinary action beyond a stern or better still, a witty remark be needed the teacher's fertile imagination should usually carry the day. A simple task such as repairing any damage done in the student's own time or denial of some desired event would normally be enough. The aim is always to help the child overcome any problems and help him/her learn from the experience. He/she will be informed of any allegations and given the opportunity to reply.

A positive relationship with the parents is essential. We see most of the parents regularly at the monthly school markets, social events, after school, working bees etc. This helps the child feel that the parents and the school are working together.

Any disciplinary action beyond this is discussed in the College of Teachers meetings. Again positive activities are the first option.

Students are aware of the school's rules and are required to follow them and the directions of teachers and other people with authority delegated by the school. Should a student disregard the rules, disobey instructions or otherwise engage in conduct which causes harm, inconvenience or embarrassment to the school, staff members or other students, the student may be, as a last resort, subject to disciplinary action.

Procedures

The disciplinary procedures undertaken by the school will vary according to the seriousness of the alleged offence. The “hearing rule” will apply in more serious cases.

When advised of the allegation the student and parents will be informed of the procedural steps to be followed in dealing with the matter. In relation to all matters to be investigated, procedural fairness will apply and students will be informed of the nature of the allegation and given an opportunity to respond.

The disciplinary procedures undertaken by the school will vary according to the seriousness of the alleged offence. The hearing rule will apply in more serious cases.

Any penalties imposed will vary according to the behaviour and the prior record of the student. At the lower end of the scale an admonition may be appropriate. At the upper end of the scale the behaviour could result in suspension or expulsion. Exclusion, as defined in the manual is not acceptable.

Discussion with parents is designed to seek out solutions and to help the school and parents work together in a constructive way. The discipline policy of the school expressly prohibits corporal punishment and does not explicitly or implicitly sanction the administering of corporal punishment by non-school persons, including parents, to enforce discipline at the school.

Behaviour Management Procedure

Most discipline problems are dealt with in class by the teacher in a fair, understanding manner, often employing humour to diffuse a situation and using story, image and simply the way in which lessons are presented. Should this not bring a positive result:

- The student is warned by the teacher to refrain from the negative behaviour and any difficulties discussed with the student. The school exists to help children who come here so procedural fairness is automatically part of the process. It is not a question of according blame; the aim is to help children overcome difficulties.
- If a teacher notices out-of-character behaviour by a student or if he is finding a child to be a problem, the parent is called in for a discussion. Something simple such as the pet dog being sick could be the cause of out-of-character behaviour. Parent discussion could immediately solve the problem.
- The College of Teachers is immediately informed by the teacher of any problem so that it can be discussed in the context of the whole school.

- If any disciplinary procedures need to be undertaken at this point they will vary according to the seriousness of the alleged offence. Monitoring of the behaviour and close-working with the student may be sufficient. Helping the student to integrate socially or working with imagery may be the appropriate measure.
- Any damage to property must be repaired or replaced by the student in his/her own time: break times or after school.
- The “hearing rule” will apply in more serious matters which could potentially lead to suspension or expulsion.

The student and parents will:

be informed of the allegations and any other information which will be taken into account in considering the matter.

- know the process by which the matter will be considered.
- respond to the allegations.
- know how to seek a review of the decision made in response to the allegations, and has the right to an unbiased decision including:
 - impartiality in an investigation and decision-making
 - unbiased decision-making.
- If no or little progress is made the student, parents and teacher meet with the principal or his/her delegate and if necessary, any witnesses to decide on further procedure and discuss whether the student should continue at the school.
- Any further disputation (if any) is reported back to the College of Teachers along with a report on the progress of the meeting. A decision on the child’s future with the school is discussed.
- If no further progress is made the parents will be offered an appeal to the College of Teachers who will review the situation. If necessary a person from outside the school, such as someone from the AIS or SEA will be called in to mediate. The parents and child may state their case further with witnesses if necessary.
- The Principal will inform the parents of the decision of the College. If the College sees no resolution a child study may be offered to the parents with the Principal, Class Teacher, and invited support staff from another Steiner School or a counsellor to gain an understanding of the child and family’s current needs and required future actions. Where emotional, social, medical, academic or family difficulty is evident, recommendations may be made for outside assessment and support, referring the parent to GP, local area health or a paediatrician. Parents would be expected to commit to such recommendations if the child is to stay at the school.
- A decision on whether the child would be suspended or expelled would be made at this meeting. Always the attempt is made to try to help a student to stay.

The following is an extract from the Registration Manual:

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

Procedural fairness refers to what is sometimes described as the ‘hearing rule’ and the ‘right to an unbiased decision’.

The ‘hearing rule’ includes the right of the person against whom an allegation has been made to:

- know the allegations related to a specific matter and any other information which will be taken into account in considering the matter;
- know the process by which the matter will be considered;
- respond to the allegations;
- 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;
- an absence of bias by a decision-maker,” and

Definitions as per Registered and Accredited Individual Non-Government Schools (N.S.W.) Manual.

Suspension

Temporary debarment of a student from all of the classes that a student would normally attend at the school.

Expulsion

is the permanent removal of a student from school.

Exclusion

is the act of preventing a student admission to a number of schools.

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