STUDENTS

Discipline Code - Rationale

Students go through different stages of growth and development and each age has unique tendencies and characteristics. Times of rapid change and growth in a student may bring about some turmoil and stress.

All students go through these stages and express characteristics appropriate for their age. Some do this more dramatically than others. Some may struggle more intensely, and some may experience a much smoother transition. Teachers, administrator and parents need to recognize that negative behavior may accompany certain stages. Positive responses to students during these occasions will reinforce the positive qualities each student possesses and enable the student to learn and grow.

In order for a student to contribute, learn and grow, the student will need to view the school as a basically kind, friendly and supportive place. Therefore, the methods teachers use to limit negative behavior and promote positive behavior should be reflective of this view.

Discipline is a process that helps teach students ways to develop their own self-control so they can ultimately be independent, responsible and have a strong reliable conscience. Teaching students self-control can be done in many ways that are helpful, supportive, and respectful of a child's individuality and humanity. Discipline should be considered a part of the learning process for a student, not a technique to be used when a problem arises. Often the term discipline is confused with the use of punishment, and the two are not the same but really opposed to each other.

True discipline is never humiliating or harmful to a student's body or self-esteem. A school with proper discipline is a school where a student is guided with wisdom, love and firmness: a firmness that will steadily bring the student toward self-discipline.

True discipline involves both preventive and corrective procedures for helping students take charge of their own lives, make decisions and learn from the consequences of those decisions.

Negative forms of child control that are punitive in nature are basically harmful to students either physically, emotionally or psychologically. Punitive controls do not promote self-discipline but create barriers between teacher and student by promoting fear, guilt, resentment, resistance, frustrations and irresponsibility. Teachers should be helpful to their students guiding them forward in a supportive spirit.

While positive approaches to discipline may not eliminate problems with students, using positive approaches will enable teachers and students to manage stressful situations with more respect and dignity for each other.

Positive Action:

1.   When a teacher's words are not succeeding, they need to accompany their words with helpful action. (This is not the same as having students pay for their misbehavior.)

  ● Actions should be taken with an eye to helping students understand better the importance of limits and rules.

2.   Teacher action is helpful when:

  ● It is taken in a supportive spirit.
  ● It is as closely connected as possible with the misbehavior so the student can learn from it.
  ● It lasts only until the student demonstrates that he/she is once again able to handle the situation appropriately.

  a.   Discussion:

  ● Verbally emphasize and clarify the teacher's expectations of the appropriate behavior desired and clarify consequences if student refuses to cooperate.

  b.   Temporarily withdraw or alter a privilege:

  ● A teacher may need to take this course of action until the student is better able to handle the situation in a responsible fashion.

  c.   A teacher may need to remove a student from a situation in which he/she is misbehaving:

  ● A teacher may have the student take "time out" away from the other students within or outside the classroom or area where the class is located. A student should never be placed outside a teacher's or supervisor's range of vision.

  d.   A student may need to be detained after school:

  ● This action should be taken rarely and with the prior approval of parents.
  ● The time spent after school should be used to academically benefit the student.

Extreme Action:

1.   Suspension
  a.   Refer to Policy 5114.

2.   Expulsion
  a.   Refer to Policy 5114.

Positive Approaches to Discipline:

1.   Clearly state expectations:

> ● Students need limits and boundaries clearly outlining the teacher's expectations for appropriate behavior.

> ● Student input needs to be considered in establishing limits and boundaries for appropriate behavior.

2.   Encouragement:

> ● By using phrases that show the teacher is confident that the student can accomplish what is set forth.

3.   Appreciate efforts and improvement:

> ● Teacher should let students know that their positive efforts are noticed no matter how small.

4.   Acknowledge a student's appropriate behavior:

> ● This will encourage and enforce it.

5.   Be simple, clear and emphatic in communication with students.

6.   Give the reasons for rules and limits.

7.   Make environmental changes to alter unacceptable behavior:

        a.   Set up alternate activities to break boredom.
        b.   Offer a mix of quiet as well as stimulating activity.
        c.   Allow ample time for breaks.

8.   Allow students time to express their feelings and thoughts about problem situations.

9.   Write a note to the student:

> ● Sometimes writing older students a brief note stating a teacher's concern can be helpful.

10.   Offer choices.

11.   Approach issues as problems to solve

> ● Discuss alternatives.

12.   Be firm and kind at the same time.

Negative Methods of Discipline:

The following negative methods of discipline are **NOT** to be used.

1. Verbal Abuse:

    ● Sarcasm, ridicule and humiliation.

2. **ALL Corporal Punishment:**

    ● Any form of physical abuse such as (but not limited to) hitting, slapping, shoving, pushing, shaking, pulling hair, twisting ears, kneeling, is inappropriate and harmful.

    ● The use of corporal punishment should be considered grounds for dismissal as set forth in Policy 4119.3.

    ● **All** forms of **verbal abuse** and **corporal punishment** are to be avoided because they:

        ▸ Are not Christlike.
        ▸ Are forms of violence.
        ▸ Offer a poor model for handling conflicts.
        ▸ Create resentment.
        ▸ Do not teach correct rules or standards.
        ▸ Make a student feel powerless and unworthy.
        ▸ Can promote a poor self-image for a student.
        ▸ Do not treat the student with respect.
        ▸ Do not help to develop a student's self-control.
        ▸ Perpetuate an unfair double standard.
        ▸ Create an atmosphere of fear.

3. Extra work of an academic nature unrelated to the offense:

    ● For instance, written assignments must have some relationship to the offense.

4. Indiscriminate punishment of all students for the misconduct of a few students.

Approved: **September 18, 1984**
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Office of Education
Diocese of Belleville

[All disciplinary procedures should be published in the local faculty, parent and student handbook.]