

COVENANT CHRISTIAN SCHOOL

Behaviour and Discipline Policy

Introduction

Because of its family-based structure Covenant Christian School is especially dependent on all parents working closely together for the common good.

Therefore, whatever your convictions about what form behaviour and discipline should take, it is important that you recognise your responsibilities to the whole school family of children, parents and teachers, and are committed to maintaining a standard of behaviour that acknowledges the Christian foundation of the school. This is not for the sake of appearances, but for the good of all, especially our pupils.

We also expect that you will maintain a high standard of behaviour at home.

All parents are therefore expected to read this document in full and to complete and return the form at the end of this policy.

Contents

	Page
1. Aims	2
2. Biblical Principles	2
3. Staff Roles and Responsibilities	3
4. Promoting Good Behaviour	4
5. The Investigation of Incidents	7

1. Aims

The aim of this policy is to encourage pupils in the school to adopt Christ-centred behaviour as a preparation for life in the home, in society and in the church. **The welfare and personal and spiritual development of all children in school is paramount and** to this end it also aims to empower teachers to discipline children in the school as and when necessary.

2. Biblical Principles

2.1 One of the fundamental teachings of Christianity, that children are all made in God's image (Gen 1v27, James 3v9), has many implications for life at school and especially for its handling of behaviour and discipline.

Pupils are all capable of being good. Many children often show exemplary behaviour, taking their studies seriously and showing care and consideration of others inside and outside the classroom. But humans are also prone to do wrong (Rom 3v23) so it is to be expected that in every school disciplinary measures must be applied from time to time.

Whatever their behaviour pattern and throughout their time at school, every child must be treated with respect (1 Pet 2v17). In particular when disciplinary measures are necessary, the teacher should explain, in terms the child understands, why that is so.

2.2 Children belong to God. They are his by right of creation. God gives children to parents; they are His stewards (Deut 6v4-9, Gen 18v19, Eph 6v4).). Hence school is an extension of the home and the discipline applied in the school is governed by the Biblical instruction given to parents to discipline children in the home. The authority that teachers have is an authority delegated from God via the parents. It has two facets, management (Gen 1 v 28) and service (Gen 2 v 15). The teacher is therefore responsible to the parents and to God for the discipline in the school.

2.3 In the scripture discipline is closely associated with love.(Ps 94v12, Heb 12v1-13. Rev 3v23). It must never be done for its own sake or without a justifiable reason (Prov 3v30, Rom 12v18). One disciplines children in love so that they may learn to behave rightly before God and for the sake of themselves and for others. An atmosphere of love should prevail by commending attitudes more than products, and by giving time, understanding and encouragement.

2.4 Every encouragement should be given to each child to understand their created personality and their worth so that they enjoy the situation in the classroom. Good behaviour should be noted and strongly encouraged (Titus 2v6). Teachers should take every opportunity to give plenty of verbal and written appreciation of effort and of good results whenever it is appropriate to do so.

2.5 Christian views of behaviour will be taught at every appropriate opportunity (2 Tim 3v16) and especially through the teaching in scripture and the examples in biographies studied in the class devotions at the beginning of each school day.

2.6 Good behaviour expressed by word must be backed by example both in teachers' general conduct and in their attitude to their work (Jas 1v22, Col 3v23, Titus 2v7). Arriving at the classroom late, lack of preparation, lack of skill or lack of care can lead to misbehaviour. So too can goals set too high or too low, giving rise to frustration or boredom. Since children are easily distracted, the attractiveness of presentation is important particularly to catch their interest at the start of a lesson.

2.7 Our responsibility as those given authority is to treat our students justly and rightly. (Lev 19v15, 1 Tim 5v21). We must accept all equally and so our discipline must be equitable and consistent. However, God creates each child as a unique person, so discipline must be sensitive. It is important to remember that events at home and in other places can exacerbate the attitude and behaviour problems that arise from a child's basic sinful nature. Discipline must take into account the child's whole life circumstances.

2.8 In the teenage years, children are maturing towards being adults. They can appreciate that discipline is about more than rules and punishments (Mark 12v28-33). Understanding God's delegated authority to secular and church leaders will be important throughout our children's lives, particularly in teenage years when they begin to question authority. In order to prepare our children for adulthood we need to continue to exercise loving discipline. (Rom 13v1, 1 Pet 2v13)

2.9 In a co-educational family school we have to provide a safe environment for all children. Adolescent humour and sexuality have to be moderated within the school. The Biblical expectation is that girls should dress decently and with propriety and boys should treat girls as sisters with purity. (Eph 4v29, Col 3v8, 1 Tim 2v9).

2.10 Out of respect all reasonable accusations made by children will be investigated. Teachers should make every effort to obtain the reports of two or more witnesses to verify a pupil's claims. (Deut 19v15)

3. Staff Roles and Responsibilities

3.1 The role of teachers

Just as all parents are responsible for their children's behaviour, so all teachers are responsible for the discipline within the school. A team effort is essential if the school is to develop and maintain a culture that is consistently firm but fair. Staff in the classroom bear the primary responsibility for maintaining a positive climate for learning. Therefore all teachers should follow the guidelines set out in section 4, implement agreed procedures for responding to unacceptable behaviour consistently and expect pupils to keep to their class code of conduct. This class code of conduct will include requiring all pupils to

- a) work quietly with any conversations being relevant to task,
- b) listen attentively to the teacher before asking any questions,
- c) listen to others in discussions and wait their turn to speak,
- d) put their hands up before coming out or calling out,
- e) speak and act kindly towards others in the school community,
- f) be honest and not cover up the truth.

This code of conduct is supported by a coherent system of rewards and sanctions.

Teachers are also responsible for ensuring that parents and class coordinators are aware of their children's behaviour, good or bad, in the school. Consequently, they should make entries in the class communication book and the serious misbehaviour record whenever necessary. In the latter case they should inform parents of the incident at the earliest opportunity.

3.2 The role of class coordinators

Class coordinators should ensure that behaviour and discipline are discussed at all class meetings and call extra meetings if they need to be considered further. At the first such meeting of the year the class coordinator should discuss potential behaviour issues with the class teachers and discuss the class code of conduct with them.

Class coordinators should read the class communication book regularly to maintain an overview of behaviour within their class and to identify trends and matters of special concern. They should check that record books and reports, which are freely accessible to parents, should include comments on the whole development of the child including his or her behavioural development.

3.3 The role of the Head of School (school coordinator)

The school coordinator should be available to discuss behaviour and discipline for as much of the school day as possible. He or she should provide support for staff experiencing difficulty with particular pupils and ensure staff training meetings take place whenever necessary. The school coordinator should ensure all cases of serious misconduct are correctly dealt with and are followed up where necessary. He or she is responsible to the Management Committee and should inform it of significant issues that have arisen in behaviour and discipline including all cases that may lead to suspension or exclusion by the Committee. The school coordinator should also ensure teachers take a consistent approach to behaviour matters.

3.4 The role of the Management Committee

The ultimate responsibility for behaviour and discipline in the school belongs to the Management Committee. This is delegated on a day-to-day basis to the school coordinator and the parents teaching at the time. However, punishment by suspension or exclusion must not be given before it is approved by the Management Committee. The Committee should ensure that all parties in the school fulfil their responsibilities in all matters of discipline and take action where this is not the case. It will ensure this policy is reviewed every two years.

4. Promoting Good Behaviour Inside and Outside the Classroom

4.1 General guidelines for teachers

Good behaviour cannot automatically be achieved merely by the organisation of the school or the work programme, nor are the children themselves responsible for it, although in the light of our aims they need to learn self-discipline, i.e. they learn to set their own goals and achieve them.

To promote a positive climate for learning the teachers should seek to create an atmosphere where the emphasis is on praise and encouragement and on the recognition of the efforts pupils make in lessons, in their relationships with adults and other pupils in the school and for adhering to the class code of conduct.

Pupils may be encouraged through oral praise, written praise in the marking of work, displaying work, deployment of responsibilities, recording success and referral to the class or school coordinators and parents. Praise must be accessible to all pupils. Praiseworthy behaviour and achievements should be recorded in the class communication book.

When a disciplinary issue arises, teachers should act quickly and effectively, not letting the issue drift or get out of hand. The issue should be recorded in the communication book along with the teacher's response. If the teacher is not sure what action is most appropriate, he or she, should consult a colleague as soon as possible. In the case of serious misconduct the incident should be recorded in the serious misconduct record and the school coordinator and parents informed as soon as possible.

Teachers should tailor their actions to individual situations. Sanctions should always take account of individual needs, age, understanding, disability, of the child's current circumstances and of signs of genuine contrition. However, pupils should know sanctions are an inevitable consequence of misbehaviour. Teachers must do what they say they will do. Wherever possible sanctions should be a logical consequence of the pupil's inappropriate action. In suitable circumstances they may be used to put right any harm they have caused.

Sanctions should be delivered calmly and persuasively, not with an angry, arrogant or condescending voice. Teachers should make it clear that they are condemning the behaviour not the person. They should encourage students to reflect on the effects of misbehaviour on themselves and the rest of the school community. It is important teachers avoid the early escalation to severe sanctions reserving them for the most serious or persistent misbehaviour. Where possible pupils should be given an opportunity to bring an incident to a close and to freely apologise for their behaviour.

4.2 Dealing with low level misconduct

Examples of low level misconduct include disruptions in class, calling out, using their mobile phone, failing to follow reasonable instructions, careless handling of property and failure to submit homework. A lesson can be disrupted because a pupil is distracting or annoying other members of the class, distracting the teacher, getting out of the seat, arriving late for the lesson, calling out or eating. All these actions can damage the concentration and progress of other students.

A teacher may begin by simply pausing or looking at or naming the student. It may only be necessary to point to the class' code of conduct. Teachers may instead start with a verbal warning, remove the child from the class for a short period or move the child's seat. If a pupil is misbehaving to achieve attention, it may in some instances be best to tactically ignore him or her. In some instances it is better to defer a detailed warning until the end of the lesson. Alternatively pupils may be excluded for five minutes of their next break and a further five minutes for every subsequent disruption. It is often effective to put a child's initials on the board. If a child is sent out of class, they must be given a clear destination, and if this is in another class, it must be by arrangement with the corresponding teacher.

If a child fails to submit homework or presents work clearly below their potential they should make good what has not been done either at home or in break time.

All low level misconduct however small should be recorded in the communication book.

4.3 Dealing with serious misconduct

This may comprise physical bullying including fighting, pushing and shoving, bullying including verbal abuse, racism, sexual misbehaviour, foul language, willfully damaging property, stealing, failing to tell the truth, truancy or disrespectful behaviour. It should also include persistent low level disruption and the frequent failure to submit homework.

Where the misbehaviour affects others the student should be encouraged to give a heartfelt apology, written if necessary.

When considering what punishment to apply teachers should bear in mind that it should be relevant and practicable. Punishments for serious misconduct could include

- a) the removal of privileges, children in the oldest class may lose the privilege to stay indoors during break,
- b) detention, this would be particularly appropriate for a child who has been arriving late without reason or who needs to stay at school to complete or improve unsatisfactory homework, but lunchtime detentions must not prevent adults or children missing the opportunity to eat, drink or use the toilets,
- c) acts of service, possibly after school or at weekends,
- d) it might in addition be appropriate to require the child to write 100 or more words explaining why they should not repeat the misdemeanour; exceptionally lines may be set; these should relate to the offence committed.
- e) confiscation of inappropriate items in the students possession,
- f) suspension or exclusion by the Management Committee.

Teachers should take into account whether the misconduct was a first offence or provoked and its effect on others. Further guidelines for various offences are listed below.

All forms of **bullying** should be dealt with according to the Bullying Policy. Care must be taken to determine a full account of the incident by interviewing those involved and others who may have witnessed it. Repeated cases of bullying should lead to suspension or exclusion.

Details of all **sexual misbehaviour** should be reported to the parents. Suspension may be necessary pending conference with the parents. Such matters should be handled in line with the Child Protection Policy.

Where **property is damaged or wrongly acquired** the items must be replaced or repaired with parents taking overall responsibility. Older students should contribute a substantial sum of money and/or efforts to make repairs themselves.

Students who **miss school without permission, arrive late repeatedly or fail to submit homework repeatedly** will face detention.

An older student may need to be withdrawn from a subject for more than one lesson in cases of **serious or repeated disruption or disrespect**. Returning to the class may depend upon a verbal or a written apology.

Persistent minor offences may be indicative of an overall attitude or behaviour problem. If a

child's misbehaviour is leading to frequent entries in the communications book, the class coordinator should arrange for the pupil to be put on report. Teachers should then fill in a lesson-by-lesson report, to be followed up with parents by the class coordinator.

Serious misconduct should be recorded by the school coordinator in the serious misbehaviour record. The parents must then be informed. Particularly serious or repeated cases of serious misbehaviour may be followed up in various ways. In such cases the school coordinator will discuss the way forward with the class coordinator. It may be necessary to hold a meeting of staff who work with the child. Parents may be required to visit the school to discuss the child's future at the school with representatives of the Management Committee.

Assaulting or intimidating staff will normally lead to suspension or exclusion.

Note :

Where it is impossible to discover who is causing trouble, the whole class should not be automatically penalised as a group, without consideration of the innocent.

In the case of very serious misbehaviour, persistent defiance or disobedience the school coordinator will have informed the management committee. In such a case several days suspension or expulsion may be deemed necessary. Parents are expected to co-operate with the Management Committee in such cases.

4.4. Discipline and the older child

The co-operative nature of the school's working involves the students too. Teenagers should begin to grasp the principle that education is for their benefit. In fact it is a privilege for them to be taught by those with expertise and experience. Ideally, as they reach secondary level, they will begin to appreciate each teacher's freely given time and efforts. The school relies on the students' co-operation in helping a lesson run effectively. Suspension from one lesson, or a series of lessons may be very suitable for those who fail to show respect or diligence in particular subjects and children should understand that they will miss out if such a course of action has to be taken.

4.5. Areas that need special attention because of Covenant Christian School's character

a) We train our children to be confident and to think for themselves.

Consequently they are sometimes over-confident and have too much to say. This has been a problem in less structured class discussions and particularly on outings. Teachers need to stress therefore what is appropriate behaviour both in public places and when being addressed by a person from outside the school.

b) Playground supervision is not easy because of the current shortage of space and the difference in age, size and interests of the children.

For this reason it is vitally important that those supervising break times aim at a consistency of discipline. Basic policies agreed by Management are contained in the School's Playground Policy document. Supervisors need to be diligent in their care of the children, both by being aware of what is happening in 'every corner' of the playground and in ensuring that the children find a security in the consistent application of the School's policies by every adult who supervises them.

5. THE INVESTIGATION OF INCIDENTS

If discipline within the school is to be applied with justice, then it must be based on accurate information. Otherwise it will appear unfair and may be discredited at least in the eyes of some. This is particularly important if the incident is a serious one and the punishment potentially severe. In making judgements teachers need to reflect on the age and reliability of the witnesses and their own perception of the incident, if they saw it themselves.

Usually when a serious problem arises it is an incident involving two or more persons. Great care should be taken in checking pupils' stories. Those involved should be questioned as soon as possible by an adult preferably in the presence of the class or the school coordinator, but away from the hearing of other children. In the event of any uncertainty, other, suitably chosen children should be brought in to give their view of the incident. The adults present should then decide whether the evidence is strong enough to warrant a punishment and, if so, what it should be in the light of guide-lines set out in the rest of this document. Their recommendation should be made to the school coordinator or the acting school coordinator who will make the final decision and refer the matter to the Management Committee if necessary. Discipline should not be unduly delayed by the investigation process.

6. TEACHER TRAINING

The training of teachers should take place at regular intervals to facilitate the implementation of this policy. All teachers not previously trained must attend such a session. Teachers should also attend training meetings when the policy is significantly updated. Where necessary help will be sought from external advisors and trainers.

March 17 (3)

Covenant Christian School

Name _____

- I/we have read the latest version of the school's discipline document.
- I/we understand the need for all families involved in the school to maintain its corporate nature in the area of discipline.
- I/we therefore undertake to work with the teaching staff to maintain a high level of self discipline with my/our own child(ren) at home.
- I/We understand that all teachers must share in the task of enforcing discipline in school and communicating incidents to parents and other members of staff.

I/we expect to be informed whenever my/our child(ren) are involved in serious or repeated incidents at school