



St Thomas More's Approach to Student Management

AT ST THOMAS MORE'S WE RECOGNISE THAT: –

“Our primary objective of education is the development of children who are responsible and inner directed, capable of choosing freely in conformity with their conscience.”

(The Catholic School, No.31)

Our values of respect, integrity, collaboration and innovation are intrinsic in our management of the students. Expectations of behaviour are developed around these values.

Corporal punishment is not used in any form with students at St. Thomas More Primary School.

Recognition of effort and growth and encouragement allow the child to own his/her own behaviour. When an inappropriate choice is made, a logical consequence follows.

We see discipline as a lifelong learning and growing process, which enables students to respect the rights of others, and to accept responsibility for their own actions and decisions.

Discipline needs to focus on the rights and responsibilities of each individual.

RIGHTS: All members of the school have the right to: -

- a supportive non-aggressive and a safe environment.
- be valued and respected and to be able to express their opinions in an appropriate manner.
- be educated so as to reach their full potential.
- expect that personal and school property will be respected.
- be treated equally and fairly.

RESPONSIBILITIES:

- To work and play safely and strive to meet expectations that will make the school an enjoyable and safe place in which to learn and grow.
- To value others and to respect them and their opinions.
- To work to full capacity to let others learn without interruptions and to let teachers teach. This will assist the school in creating a learning environment.
- To take care of and respect the property of others. To take care of and respect the property of the school.
- To treat others as you would want them to treat you.

WHOLE SCHOOL CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT:

The staff believes that classroom management should be consistent across the school. It should be:

- Respectful (we are mindful of our relationship with the student, this is crucial to everything we do and believe)
- Reasonable (the consequence matches the misbehaviour)
- Related (the consequence bears some relationship to the misbehaviour)
- Relevant (the student can see and understand the relationship between the misbehaviour and the consequence)
- Reliable (each time the misbehaviour occurs, enacted by any student, the consequence will be the same)

Our Whole School Approach to Behaviour Management allows all students, staff and parents to know that the language, expectations and consequences will be similar across the school regardless of teacher or situation (inside or outside).

PHILOSOPHY:

Our underlying principles are based on the work conducted by psychologist, Alfred Adler, and later modified by Professor Maurice Balson. This approach is based on the belief that the goal of all human behaviour is to belong.

A student attempts to belong by:

- Appropriate or inappropriate means
- This can be witnessed in every classroom and playground from the smallest movement away from the agreed rules to major disruptions that occur on a daily basis

Students engaging in inappropriate behaviour are experiencing discouragement...

Inappropriate behaviour may be viewed as:

- Attention seeking
- Power seeking
- Revenge seeking
- Withdrawal or hopelessness

When using this approach, all teachers need to engage in the 'process of encouragement'

Encouragement means to give heart. It is our task to try endlessly to 'give heart' to all students.

- Praise and 'extrinsic' rewards are not used in this approach
- Students are encouraged to understand and feel the 'intrinsic' reward of belonging to the group. This is the basic goal of all human behaviour.

Encouragement involves:

- Language which encourages and recognises the effort of the student
- It often begins with the words:

"I really like the way you....."

- It often ends with the words:

"What do you like about?", "What do you think about?" "What can you do differently next time?"

- It gives ownership to the student

Encouragement separates the 'actor' from the 'act'

- Students who are encouraged behave appropriately because they recognise that this adds to the 'social order', to the well being of the group
- They feel the 'intrinsic' benefit of adding to the 'social cohesiveness' and 'social capital' of their family, class, school and eventually, society

CLASSROOM CLIMATE:

At the beginning of each year teachers discuss these concepts with their class. These statements set out for the children the kinds of behaviour that are acceptable and help them to understand the need for each person to respect the rights of others and to accept their own responsibility for keeping our school a safe and happy place.

Co-operative classrooms operate best when they are viewed and operate as 'mini models' of democratic societies

- Rules are based on respect and on everyone's right to learn and to feel safe
- Rules are arrived at democratically
- Classroom meetings are a regular part of the group's routine
- Our work is about 'giving heart' to all students no matter how discouraged they may be
- Our classrooms are smaller models of the world in which our students will live and work
- By our consistent, patient, co-operative efforts, we can help each other to create independent, socially competent students who will take the skills and values we model with them into the world.

We conduct regular Class Meetings in order to: -

- Develop a sense of belonging
- Give the children a sense that they can influence school / class decisions and contribute to the welfare of the class/school
- An opportunity to enjoy each other's company, express our feelings about one another and give encouragement

Basic Ground Rules

1. The teacher and students practise mutual respect which includes listening together, taking turns and making recommendations
2. The meetings are held so that we can all work together to solve problems and as a result help each other

Inappropriate behaviour inside the classroom:

- Teachers ask the student to stop whatever is interrupting the learning within the room.
- If the behaviour continues, the student is asked to move away from the group until they are ready to do what the other students are doing.
- If the behaviour still continues, the student will be given the choice of completing the work during recess or lunch time.
- If a student does not respond positively, he / she will be asked to move to another room to complete the set work.
- The teacher will later discuss the behaviours with the student.
- Other teachers may provide support for the classroom teacher by talking with the student about their behaviour.
- If necessary, a parent meeting will be convened to discuss the issues.

Inappropriate behaviour in Specialist Classes:

- Teachers ask the student to stop whatever is interrupting the learning within the room.
- If the behaviour continues, the student is asked to move away from the group until they are ready to do what the other students are doing.
- If a student does not respond positively, he / she will be moved to another specialist class (by prior arrangement) for time out or to complete set work.
- The teacher will later discuss the behaviours with the student.
- Specialists will inform class teacher about the behaviour if deemed necessary.
- In serious cases, a parent meeting will be convened to discuss the issues.

Inappropriate Behaviour outside the classroom:

- If students are not following rules on the yard, they maybe sent to an area of the school to have some time to think about what they have been doing. This allows them time to calm down and for both the teacher and student to think about what could happen next time and if a consequence needs to be put in place. Areas within the school suitable for time away are the sails area, sandpit, amphitheatre, a table in the car park.
- At St. Thomas More we have a 'hands off policy'. If a student is involved in extreme rough play, fighting or kicking, they are deemed to be not safe to be near other students. If the situation is dangerous the student will be removed from the yard. The actions of the students will be discussed and if the school believes the actions were unsafe or another child is injured, the offenders parents will be notified and a subsequent meeting called. The student would spend time in the office area completing work until their parent is able to discuss the situation. In most cases, the parent would be asked to take the child home.

RESPONDING TO SERIOUS OFFENCES WHICH DO NOT COME UNDER THE NORMAL POLICY

A serious offence is defined as activities or behaviour of a student which:

1. seriously undermines the ethos of the Catholic School , or
2. consistently and deliberately fails to comply with any instruction from the teacher in charge, or the Principal or
3. is offensive, or dangerous to, the physical or emotional health of any student or staff member
4. consistently and deliberately interferes with the educational opportunities of other students.

EXAMPLE OF SERIOUS OFFENCES:

- Extremes of, or repeated bullying, or harassment
- Use of premeditated violence to other students or staff members
- Theft
- Ongoing use of unacceptable and offensive language
- Other behaviours as deemed by the Principal as serious in nature
- Inappropriate use of technology

Follow Up Procedures:

A Child Safety and Wellbeing Team Meeting is held every 3 weeks to follow up with student issues or to allow teachers to seek advice or present a student to be referred to CEO Student Services

Behaviour Management Plan:

A Behaviour Management Plan would be formalised and implemented. Staff, parents and the students would be involved in the process of developing a timeline. The plan would be signed and dated by all parties involved and filed for future reference.

In -school withdrawal:

If the school decides that a student should not return immediately to the classroom, then they will spend the first day in a school withdrawal situation. We believe that a student should be withdrawn within the school community as it maintains a student's connectedness and engagement with the school. The student would have work to be completed throughout the day. They will be provided with a place to work away from other students and under the supervision of an adult, usually the Principal or Deputy Principal.

Out of School Suspension:

If the student has posed a threat to staff or other students an out of school suspension will be implemented. The parents would be notified by phone and a meeting held to discuss the issues. A formal letter will also be sent home explaining the incident and the measures taken to deal with the situation and the student. The letter will set out the legal and pastoral responsibilities of the parents, the school's responsibility in setting work for the students while they are home, the process of settling them back into school on their return and the monitoring procedures which will be put in place.

In line with C.E.C.V. Policy, a Discipline and Welfare Group may be established, which is made up of -

- ~ Principal
- ~ Classroom Teacher
- ~ Parents
- ~ Student
- ~ CEO Personnel
- ~ Specialist Assistance (as appropriate)

THE PROCESS

- Consider issues relevant to behaviour of student and implications for others in community;
- Identify critical factors leading to offence;
- Identify educational and social needs of the student;
- Identify and explore strategies to re-establish child in the life of the school;
- Consider support and resources, which may be available from both within and outside the school;
- Develop an action plan for responding to the student's behaviour and strategies implemented to deal with the student's behaviour

A final plan for dealing with student misbehaviour is an expulsion. Assistance for dealing with these processes is available from Diocesan Catholic Education Office personnel (Pastoral Care Unit)

This Policy was reviewed and updated in its current format by the staff, in June, 2017.