



KNOWLEDGE IS THE ULTIMATE SOLUTION

Discipline and Classroom Management Policy

Western Grammar School
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Discipline and Classroom Management

Discipline in the school reflects on attitude to orderly behaviour existing within all members of the school community, an attitude which promotes proper behaviour in all situations. It is more likely to arise out of positive reinforcing within clear guidelines than through threats and punishment. The aim of discipline within the school is behaviour modification not the instilling of fear and coercion.

Western Grammar School expressly prohibits corporal punishment and does not sanction the administering of corporal punishment by non-school persons, including parents, to enforce discipline at the school.

Research has shown that punishment is not very effective in eliminating unwanted behaviour and can have adverse effects on emotional development:

1. Though punishment temporarily suppresses the deviant behaviour, it becomes channelled into aggression and reappears as soon as the punisher leaves the room.
2. If misbehaviour is attention seeking, punishment is reinforcing and increases the probability that misbehaviour will continue.
3. Punishment produces avoidance behaviour, i.e., keeping out of the teacher's way, skipping classes, pretending to work, cheating or daydreaming.
4. Punishment can create an attitude of resentment against the teacher, so damaging the teacher/pupil relationship.
5. Punishment can generate anxiety in the student being punished and in others who witness the punishment, which can hinder performance.
6. Punishment for poor performance causes students to assess themselves as failures generating a poor self-image, which becomes continually reinforced by the expectation of further failure. The effects of this cycle can last a lifetime and can flow into everything the person attempts to do.
7. The punishment may become associated with the general environment in the mind of the student and so generate negative feeling towards the School and School related activities.
8. When a teacher punishes, a model of behaviour is being given that would be undesirable if copied by the pupils.
9. Punishment teaches students that "might is right" and that morality has to do with avoiding punishment and seeking reward.

This is not to say that all punishment is wrong or ineffective. Rather, it should be always borne in mind that a punishment must be directed towards eliminating unwanted behaviour through behaviour modification and it should not be an automatic response inflicted without thought about the possible consequences.

The first and perhaps most important consideration in any attempt to foster a spirit of discipline within the school is the quality of the environment within which the students work and play. If teachers are poorly prepared, if needed equipment is not in place, if there is nothing for the students to do, if the students are bored, if the students are poorly organised, nothing can be done to instil discipline. All activities within the school day must be well organised so that all concerned know what they are supposed to be doing. The School must ensure that facilities are provided and that they are in good order.

The second consideration concerns the knowledge of procedures and regulations. Everyone within the School community must be aware of what regulations exist and the correct procedures governing all activities. No area can be left to chance.

Thirdly, the reinforcement of the rules and regulations must be consistent and according to commonly held policies. Any differences in views have to give way to the agreed upon policy, so that the students see no inconsistencies in the reinforcement of discipline.

Lastly, actual punishment for wrong doing, in whatever form, must be a last resort, used only after thought out behaviour modification techniques have been tried. The emphasis should always be on the positive so that a sense of discipline grows from a fostering of a feeling of self-worth within a positive and relaxed school environment.

Students who have difficulty in learning and who create behavioural problems are indicating their inability to find a place in the class through constructive activity and are resorting to inappropriate behaviour in a bid to gain recognition, significance and a feeling of belonging.

Classroom misbehaviour is often directed towards one of four goals:

- **Attention seeking:**
Students who seek attention aim to put teachers in their service or to receive special recognition. The clown, the nuisance, the lazy student are examples of attention seekers.

The teacher's typical reaction is often to feel minor annoyance and this reaction may temporarily stop the misbehaviour, but it will soon reappear.

- **Inadequacy:**

Students who display inadequacy are those who are very discouraged and no longer hope for any success or recognition in class. They cease to make any effort. They appear stupid or incompetent. They desire to be left alone so their assumed deficiency may go unnoticed. The majority of students who perform very poorly in school operate on this goal. Their failure has nothing to do with ability--but reflects their faulty decision about what to do concerning their lack of recognition or success. The teacher often feels like giving up but this reaction will reinforce the student's disinterest.

- **Power:**

Students whose goal is power believe they belong by being the most powerful. They may be stubborn, disobedient, defiant, apathetic, argumentative and uncooperative. Their failure to complete assignments or homework is frequently an attempt to defeat teachers. If the teacher responds to the challenge personally the behaviour will persist.

- **Revenge:**

Students who seek revenge feel hurt and disliked. They wish to hurt others as they themselves have been hurt. They are sullen, morose, vicious, cruel, violent and moody. If the teacher feels deeply hurt the behaviour is intensified.

To build up a positive atmosphere will go some way towards resolving many discipline problems. Teachers may apply individual psychology in the following ways:

- **Go against the first impulse:**

Whatever the teacher feels like doing is often exactly what the student wants. Therefore teachers (and parents) must learn to act rather than react.

- **Use the encouragement process:**

Students who are experiencing difficulties in a subject, or who possess negative attitudes towards it, are those who have lost confidence in their ability to meet the demands which teachers make upon them.

Mistake centred approaches provide a series of discouraging experiences by putting before the student errors he has made or his inappropriate work habits. By focusing on mistakes the student's confidence is eroded away.

Practices which aim to encourage students include the following:

- Build on assets and strengths while minimising mistakes and deficiencies.
- Emphasise the activity not the result.
- Provide recognition for effort.
- Show faith in students and their ability so that students may have faith in themselves.
- Establish group cohesion. One of the best methods of achieving this is by sharing responsibilities. The whole class should take responsibility for misbehaviour and decide as a group what is to be done.

Development of self-discipline in the student:

- Mutual respect for all (student/teacher, teacher/student, and student/student) should be fostered.
- Students are not to be detained in classroom at recess or lunchtime, or before or after school, unless the class teacher remains in the room, (special arrangements are made for wet days).

BASIC RULE - no teacher in the room, no student in the room.

- Students must move through/between buildings in a quiet and orderly manner; whole classes and groups must be supervised e.g. moving to library. Those children moving from class to class i.e. between periods need not be supervised, however they must still move in an orderly manner.
- Students are not to stand in corridor, on desk seat or chair as a disciplinary measure. Students should not be stood outside of classrooms.
- Any serious discipline problem is to be referred to the Head Teacher/Principal
- All students are expected to keep school grounds and buildings in a neat and tidy condition.

General Discipline Procedure

When positive behaviour modification techniques fail to cause a change in student's behaviour pattern and this pattern becomes disruptive to the normal functioning of the class a series of discipline procedures may be resorted to. These same procedures may be resorted to solve any intractable discipline problems in the classroom or outside the classroom.

Quiet discussion:

The teacher talks with the student or class about the problem and suggestions to remedy the situation are agreed upon by the student or the class. The teacher may also employ minor procedures such as the "thinking chair" or a "quiet corner" to give the student an opportunity to reflect or become aware of his or her role in the development of the problem.

Withdrawal:

The student may be isolated from the other students and given a task to keep him/her occupied or may be withdrawn from the class or playground.

Extra duties:

Students may be given extra duties of any type to perform at home or during their free time at school. Care should be taken that these extra duties are monitored.

Removal of Privileges:

Privileges ranging from minor to major may be withdrawn either temporarily or permanently. Removal from a position of responsibility or keeping the student from participating in a desired event (sport, games, excursion) are fairly serious matters and should be decided upon only after much thought.

Discussing the problem with another teacher(s):

The teacher may discuss the problem with other teacher(s) who teaches the same student. This technique may help to resolve some mild problems. If the problem persists, then more senior authority usually the Head Teacher and/or Principal should become involved in the matter and further action(s) may become necessary.

Contacting Parents:

Parents will be contacted by phone or by letter to make them aware of the existence of the problem and its intractable nature. When informed, parents could be of a good use as they may discuss the matter with the student and decide on appropriate measures from their side.

Support for students during interviews:

Students have the choice of asking for a support person during any of their interviews to ensure procedural fairness. An interpreter will also be made available at the request of the student.

Parent Interviews:

Parents may be called to the school, through senior authority, to discuss the matter in person in the presence of the student to see if some changes in the unwanted behaviour can be achieved. More serious episodes may require discussion without the student being present.

Suspension/Expulsion of Student: (Only through the Principal in the most extreme case. Refer to suspension, expulsion Policy.

All student records will be stored in student files.