

Knights Templar School/

Discipline Policy

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Knights Templar School – Discipline Policy 2007-2008

The School's Mission Statement

To provide a safe, happy and well ordered environment, with a Christian ethos, in which children are valued and able to develop into balanced, responsible members of the community.

Aims of the School

The School aims:

- to promote the spiritual, cultural, mental and physical growth of all of its pupils, endeavouring to prepare them for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life
- to consider the emotional well being of all pupils
- to help children to develop to their full potential on all aspects of the curriculum
- to help children to develop lively, enquiring minds and a desire to learn
- to ensure that the teaching of basic skills is effective throughout the school, so that children are able to access the wider curriculum
- to help children to live together in a caring community, concerned for each other and able to forge sound relationships
- to develop a sense of moral responsibility in children and to promote the growth of self discipline
- to guide children to some understanding of, and respect for, the cultures, religious beliefs and practices of others

Our Beliefs

We believe that all children have the right

- to feel safe at school, physically and emotionally
- to be able to learn to the best of their ability
- to be treated with dignity at all times, in all circumstances

The Practitioners' Group on School Discipline and Behaviour, chaired by Sir Alan Steer, noted in the Learning Behaviour report (2005), 'the quality of learning, teaching and behaviour are inseparable issues and the responsibility of all staff'.

This school aims to have a range of appropriate rewards and sanctions, with a clear balance between the two, and seeks to ensure that they are applied fairly and consistently by all staff. Pupils should be helped to learn how to behave appropriately and good behaviour needs to be modelled by adults in all interactions with pupils. The boundaries of acceptable behaviour must be made clear. Children learn respect by receiving it and all members of staff should act in a way which is reasonable and proportionate to the circumstances.

The school uses the Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL) resources and pupils will have opportunities to develop their emotional literacy, learning how to manage strong feelings, to resolve conflict, to work and play co-operatively and to be respectful and considerate. Pupils will learn to develop and use a common language to describe behaviour. There will also be opportunities to provide small group support for pupils who need it.

It has been long established that rewards are more effective than punishment in motivating pupils. The system of rewards used in the school is described in detail in the Behaviour Policy. Praise will always be used to motivate and encourage children. However the Education and Inspections Act of 2006 confirms and clarifies the schools' powers to discipline, reducing the risk of misunderstandings and challenges to their disciplinary authority. The Act strengthens the right of the school to enforce disciplinary sanctions on pupils when their conduct falls below the standard which could be reasonably expected of them.

Sanctions are more likely to promote positive behaviour if members of staff make it clear that they are dealing with the behaviour, not stigmatising the person. They must take account of individual needs and wherever possible, they should use sanctions that are a logical consequence of a pupil's inappropriate behaviour e.g. if work is not finished in class, the pupil may have to stay in at break to finish it. Teachers should avoid whole group sanctions that punish the innocent as well as the guilty.

As a general rule, teachers should

- use sanctions to help the pupils and others to learn their from mistakes and to recognise how they can improve their behaviour and put right any harm they have caused when appropriate.
- use sanctions in a calm and controlled manner.
- never use sanctions that are humiliating or degrading.
- ensure that sanctions are seen as inevitable and consistent – pupils should know that a sanction, when mentioned, will be used.
- link the concept of sanctions to the concept of choice – pupils should see the connection between their own behaviour and its impact on themselves and others – they should take increasing responsibility for their own behaviour.

Many instances of poor behaviour in the classroom or around the school can be dealt with by teachers. All members of staff should aim for a non-confrontational focus and should adopt least to most intrusive behaviour management techniques. These include:

- tactical ignoring – the conscious decision to ignore behaviours such as sulking, sighing or calling out in order to keep the focus on the flow of the lesson. The teacher can discuss the behaviour with the child at the end of the lesson.
- non-verbal signs, such as a 'hard stare' or a shake of the head.
- waiting until everyone is still and paying attention.
- brief reminders of agreed class or school rules.
- a focus on children who are behaving well – positive comments.
- writing a child's name on the board.
- a clear warning of what will happen if a child chooses to continue with the unacceptable behaviour (forced choices) – preferably given away from the rest of the class.
- ignoring 'secondary behaviours' – a child's pouting, sulking, argumentative stance etc. which can distract the teacher from the primary issue and can cause stress.
- use of graduated 'cool off' time or 'time out' - this should be used when a child has chosen to continue disruptive or unacceptable behaviour despite reminders about rules. The child may be asked to move to a different part of the room or to another room if the behaviour continues – to be followed by careful re-integration into class.

Any sustained discussion about a child's behaviour should be deferred until the end of a lesson.

Time out/Exit Plans

There is an agreed procedure for situations where a child refuses to leave the room having been abusive or having acted in a way that is dangerous to others. A message should be sent to the Headteacher, a senior teacher or the SENCO. (A 'Time Out' card should be kept in the Behaviour file in each class). The child will then be escorted to a cool off area. If the child still refuses to leave, then the class teacher should take the rest of the class out to another area. It is important to deprive the child of an audience.

The SENCO or a senior teacher may be involved in plans for subsequent re-integration.

After any 'time out', the child should be able to make a fresh start in his/her class and that relations are re-established with the class teacher. The child's dignity must be retained.

It is important that frequent incidents of poor behaviour are recorded on the "Behaviour Log" sheets provided so that patterns of behaviour can be observed and a bank of evidence collected, to share with parents. The evidence will also be needed when planning any behaviour recovery processes.

Possible sanctions

Loss of privileges – pupils may be asked to miss a playtime or a planned treat.

Reparation – children could be asked to help to repair any damage they have caused e.g. cleaning walls or equipment they have scribbled on.

Lunchtime Detentions

These can be given by the teachers in this school. Parents should be made aware that detentions may be given to pupils in this school.

In the Knights Templar School, detentions are only to be used during lunchtimes. The teacher who gives the detention should ensure that children are taken to the hall and that the lunchtime supervisors working in the hall are aware of their presence to ensure their safety and well being. Detentions are more likely to be given to pupils in Key Stage 2 though they may sometimes be appropriate for older Key Stage 1 pupils. The duration of the detention will usually be 20/25 minutes. A child will eat at his or her normal sitting. This would not be a suitable sanction for pupils who go home to lunch.

Teachers should decide whether pupils should engage in some activity during the detention or whether the time is to be used for quiet reflection.

Children should always be given time to go to the toilet, to have a drink and to have the opportunity for some fresh air and exercise before lessons begin again.

It is good practice to inform parents that their child has been given a detention, with an outline of the behaviour leading to the sanction. If pupil is given several detentions, a log should be kept so that patterns of behaviour can be tracked and other courses of action taken to prevent further poor behaviour. Please refer to the chart included with this policy.

Confiscation of Pupils' Property

The Education and Inspections Act gives teachers the power to seize, retain and to sometimes dispose of items as one of the disciplinary measures applied as part of the Behaviour Policy. This sanction must be applied in a reasonable and proportionate way.

Generally, property can be confiscated to maintain an environment conducive to learning or where an item poses a threat to others or where it poses a health and safety risk.

Pupils have a right to expect that confiscated items will be stored safely until they are returned.

In most cases, confiscation of an item is a sufficient sanction and the item should be returned at the end of the day.

There may be some instances when the school chooses not to return an item to the pupil;

- Items of no value, such as an inappropriate message scrawled on a piece of paper, may be thrown away.
- Any item of value which a pupil should not have brought to school should be stored safely until a responsible family adult can come to collect it.
- Any item of an unlawful or hazardous nature may be given to a parent or in certain circumstances, to an external agency for disposal.

Behaviour Recovery Plans

Teachers have the option of placing a Key Stage 1 child with persistently poor behaviour on a 'Behaviour Recovery Plan', in agreement with the child, the parents/carers, the class teacher and in some cases, the SENCO. Plans will include specific targets and will be reviewed on a regular basis until the poor behaviour improves.

Children in Key Stage 2 may be placed 'on report' for a specified time, again in agreement with the child, the parents/carers, the class teacher and the SENCO where appropriate. Behaviour targets will be agreed and in some cases, an IEP will be written.

A yellow 'report card' is available, to be signed by the teacher at the end of lessons. Brief details of the child's behaviour can be recorded on the card, or a note made of the child's progress in meeting the targets, and the information shared with the child's parents on a daily or weekly basis.

A green 'behaviour support card' may be used to maintain good behaviour if the teacher thinks that it will be beneficial.

The use of a 'personal improvement plan' based on plans used by the pastoral support team in Danesfield Middle School, is to be trialled with pupils in Year 4. Parents will be involved in both the target setting process and the tracking of progress. The plan is intended to help with transition to the Middle School.

Pastoral Support Plans

A plan will be written when a pupil's poor behaviour is escalating and the pupil is in danger of exclusion. Meetings will be held with the pupil, the class teacher, the parents/carers, the SENCO and sometimes, a senior member of staff. Targets will be set and support planned. Pupils may be given an adult mentor at this stage.

Taking account of special educational needs, disability and the circumstances of other vulnerable pupils.

The legislation which underpins equality of opportunity for disabled pupils in accessing school education makes it unlawful for schools to discriminate against disabled pupils on grounds of their disability. Schools are expected to take reasonable steps to avoid placing disabled pupils at a substantial disadvantage (the reasonable adjustments duty).

Disabled pupils are those who have a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial or long term effect on their ability to carry out normal day to day activities.

The definition is broad and includes pupils with a wide range of needs including a range of learning difficulties, conditions such as diabetes and epilepsy and those who have recovered from cancer and disfigurement. It also includes conduct disorders, such as oppositional defiance disorder (ODD); hyperkinetic disorders such as attention deficit disorder or attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADD/ADHD) and syndromes such as Tourette's and other mental health disorders. Some pupils with behavioural, emotional or social difficulties (BESD) may also be considered to be disabled.

There is a higher incidence of BESD identified in children with other special education needs. Pupils with an Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) or speech, language and communication difficulties can display challenging behaviours. Understanding the main need or disorder can help to identify suitable interventions and can lessen the behaviours significantly. The disorders do not need to have been officially diagnosed in order for a pupil to be classified as disabled; the impairment simply needs to exist.

Teachers, working with the SENCO, should identify those pupils who have learning or behavioural difficulties, or come from communities or homes that are in crisis, and agree common ways of managing and meeting their particular needs. It is important that information and details of any decisions or agreed courses of action are communicated to other members of staff, including the lunchtime supervisors. A good pastoral system involves teachers and all support staff.

Members of staff should always be made aware of any child protection issues that might have a bearing on the operation of the Discipline Policy. The designated Child Protection Officer – currently Karen Bass – or the Headteacher will undertake to keep members of staff informed.

All members of staff need to take account of a pupil's age, any special educational needs and/or disability and any religious requirements when deciding on sanctions. It is vital that information about specific children is made available. A list of vulnerable children is kept in the office, together with any special requirements or arrangements. The SENCO will also ensure that relevant information is given to teachers, teaching assistants and lunchtime supervisors. Members of staff are reminded of the section of the School's Code of Conduct which deals with confidentiality.

Account must be taken of pupils with special educational needs or disabilities but also of the needs of other groups defined by Ofsted as 'at risk' within the education system, including minority ethnic and faith groups, travellers, asylum seekers and refugees, pupils who need support to learn English as an additional language (EAL), children looked after by the local authority, sick children, young carers, children from families under stress and any pupils at risk of disaffection and exclusion.

All of these groups may at some point require adults to take into consideration their individual needs and circumstances when applying the school's Behaviour and Discipline Policies and to use common sense when making decisions.

Pupils who are experiencing trauma or significant loss can act in ways that are irrational or unhelpful to themselves and others. The SENCO and special needs assistants will endeavour to liaise with parents/carers or with external agencies and to establish systems to detect pupils' distress and make arrangements for children to retreat to a safe haven when they are at risk of losing control of their behaviour. It is important that these children realise that some behaviours, particularly those that place others at risk, will always carry a sanction. They should be helped to make appropriate behavioural choices, even when under stress. Sanctions should be managed carefully so that pupils know that adults understand their feelings and are concerned for their well being.

Where behaviours do not carry a risk to others, sanctions may sometimes be modified in the light of a child's personal circumstances. Carefully planned responses may be required when pupils do not have the necessary cognitive, physical or social and emotional competences to follow school rules. Any adaptations should be explained to other pupils so that they can be accepted as appropriate and fair. Pupils, parents and members of staff should be aware that from time to time some pupils will be treated differently.

However, where vulnerable pupils do have the necessary understanding and competences to follow school rules but make a conscious decision to behave differently, then the firm framework of rules, rewards and sanctions linked to the agreed rights and responsibilities helps all pupils to make appropriate choices. Expectations are clear, as are the consequences of behavioural choices.

'Time Out' cards should be kept in a Behaviour file in each room so that a teacher can send for help when necessary. Sometimes a challenging child can be persuaded to leave the room with appropriate adults. There may be times though when the class teacher must take the rest of the class to another room whilst adults calm a child.

The training needs of staff working with pupils with significant behavioural difficulties should be addressed because they play a key role in developing good practice. Teachers should call upon the skills of the SENCO and special needs assistants who have some understanding, knowledge and experience of work with challenging children. After discussion with class teachers, assistants will be placed where they can work most effectively with these children.

Members of staff should consult the SENCO when they are unsure about how to apply the disciplinary framework in incidents involving vulnerable pupils. Many of the pupils concerned will also have a key worker who knows them well and has good links with home.

Vulnerable pupils must have an agreed means of removing themselves from situations where tensions are escalating. They should also have access to key adults when they are under stress.

Communicating the Behaviour and the Discipline Policy

The Headteacher is under a legal duty to publicise both of these policies at least once a year in the form of a written document. The policies must be brought to the attention of all pupils, parents and school staff, including anyone working in the school on a voluntary basis. It is particularly important to publicise the policies as regards detentions (an unlawful sanction if not made generally known within the school and to parents of registered pupils) and in relation to confiscation (which necessarily entails an interference with a pupil's property rights).

Exclusions

Fixed term exclusion from the school is a very serious measure and it would only be considered when a child's behaviour had put others in danger or was clearly interfering with other children's rights. In most cases, when in danger of exclusion, the child would have been placed on a pastoral support plan and outside agencies would have been involved. LA procedures will be followed where a child is excluded.