



Discipline Policy

Guidelines and Procedure

1. POLICY

School Vision and Mission Statement:

To faithfully serve in God's plan to restore all things under the Lordship of Jesus Christ by assisting parents in the nurture of their children by providing a Christ-centred, biblically grounded, culturally engaging and academically rigorous education which equips children to live for God's glory.

The aim of all discipline, both positive, affirming discipline and negative, restorative discipline is to assist students in their growth to maturity as image bearers of God. Teachers will aim to model Christian behaviour as well as lead the students in their care to be more Christ-like as they grow in faith to become His disciples. Although not all students are Christians, at Covenant Christian School all discipline will be according to scriptural principles.

The school does not administer corporal punishment nor does it explicitly or implicitly sanction the administering of corporal punishment by non-school persons, including parents, to enforce discipline.

Discipline is a means of ensuring the welfare of students. As students mature they must come to the realisation that there are consequences for actions. At school, these consequences should be consistent, fair and in proportion to the occasion. Negative discipline, or punishment, must also involve repentance and restoration. A passage which gives a good summary of the purposes of discipline is in Hebrews. Here we are reminded that even when God rebukes or disciplines us it is for our good and is an expression of His love. Hebrews 12:6-10 ... *the Lord disciplines those He loves ... God disciplines us for our good, that we may share in His holiness.* The same should be true for school discipline. If at any point disciplinary action is taken because of personal animosity then it is not biblical discipline. Similarly, all Christian discipline must work towards reconciliation, righteousness and goodness, even if painful in its immediate effect.

Scripture makes it clear that God loves His people while hating sin. Christian discipline should similarly show our disapproval of sinful actions in a context of continuing love for those being disciplined.

2. PRINCIPLES AND PROCEDURES

- Discipline should be founded on love and concern, and intended for the good of the child and those around him/her.
- Discipline should contribute towards a student's growth in Christ.
- All Christian discipline must work towards peace and righteousness. Thus it should involve repentance, reconciliation and restitution.
- Discipline should help develop an understanding in students that there are consequences to the choices that they make.
- Discipline may include positive and negative elements - acknowledging, confirming, commending, encouraging, helping as well as correcting, reprimanding and punishing.
- Discipline should be clearly defined.
- Discipline should be exercised promptly.
- Discipline must be consistent and administered fairly so as not to exasperate the child concerned or other children. This does not mean that the disciplinary actions need to be the same for each child as they are unique and circumstances are unique.
- Discipline should deal with an action or attitude not with the student as a person so that it is clear that we love the person while hating the sin.
- Discipline must take into account the maturity of the child and his/her capacity to follow instructions and meet expectations.

- Punishment should be for deliberate misdemeanours, defiance or rebellion, not for mistakes.
- Similarly, commendation should be for conscious actions of a child not for things that happen incidentally or without real effort. Teachers should acknowledge the way a gift has been used not the gift itself.
- As far as possible there should be one punishment for one sinful act. However, it may ultimately be necessary to take action over an entrenched problem indicated by a series of related misdemeanours. Similarly, where a student has worked steadily over an extended period it is appropriate to recognise that.
- Where a student has been dealt with for an offence, he/she should be forgiven and the sin no longer referred to. Discipline should as far as possible be complete and final. Similarly, where a child has been commended or encouraged for a particular effort they should be encouraged to look ahead to the next opportunity rather than be reminded of the previous one.
- Discipline should seek to develop self-discipline and thus not depend too heavily or exclusively on external motivation, such as structured rewards and punishments, which may produce external changes without changing the inner person or produce results for the wrong reasons (e.g. pride or fear.)
- As the school works closely in partnership with parents, they are to be involved in the process of disciplining their children as much as possible.

The overall desired goal of discipline is for students to take responsibility for their own behaviour. Students are encouraged to show respect for themselves their peers and others, for the environment and especially to respect and submit to the authority of the staff. In this way students are encouraged to grow in wisdom and to become self-disciplined. Being well behaved is not merely a matter of obeying a set of rules but derives from a personal discernment of what is appropriate and Christ-like behaviour.

This revised discipline policy aims to clarify and simplify both the thinking behind discipline and the procedures and administration of discipline at Covenant Christian School. The discipline review sought to:

- Improve the **consistency** and **immediacy** of discipline across Covenant Christian School;
- Develop an overarching **culture of respect** relating to staff, students and the school environment
- Develop improved **staff commitment** towards the school's discipline expectations upon them
- Develop a discipline system that focuses on changing behaviours and is **restorative**

Both teachers and students are encouraged to consider the words of Paul: *"Whatever happens, conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the Gospel of Christ" (Philippians 1:27).*

PROCEDURES Preschool and K-6

Discipline in the preschool and Junior School is dealt with by the classroom teacher on an individual basis. Serious issues are referred to the Head of Junior School. All the issues relating to procedural fairness in Appendix 1 also apply to Junior School discipline.

PROCEDURES Years 7-12

Classroom Management techniques will generally manage most situations. Seating plans, moving students, the exclusion roster and support from the subject Coordinator will cover day to day issues.

Formal warning cards are used to alert students to their misbehaviour. Lunchtime detentions for 20 minutes are for repeated homework, class work, disrespect and repeated uniform infringements. Should a student persist in wrong behaviour they will be required to have a mentoring card for a week's lessons or longer as well as having an interview with the Coordinator or Deputy Pastoral Care as appropriate. There would generally be a parent interview at this stage.

For serious offences, Friday after school detentions and in or out of school suspensions will still apply.

The diagram below outlines key procedures.

Discipline Process for Secondary School

In-Class/Playground Teacher Behaviour Management Techniques

Home class discussion of respect

Student given Lunch Detention

Detention entered on Edumate: Welfare/ Record Discipline.

Student Attends Detention

During detention student completes work not done or other work, or sits quietly.

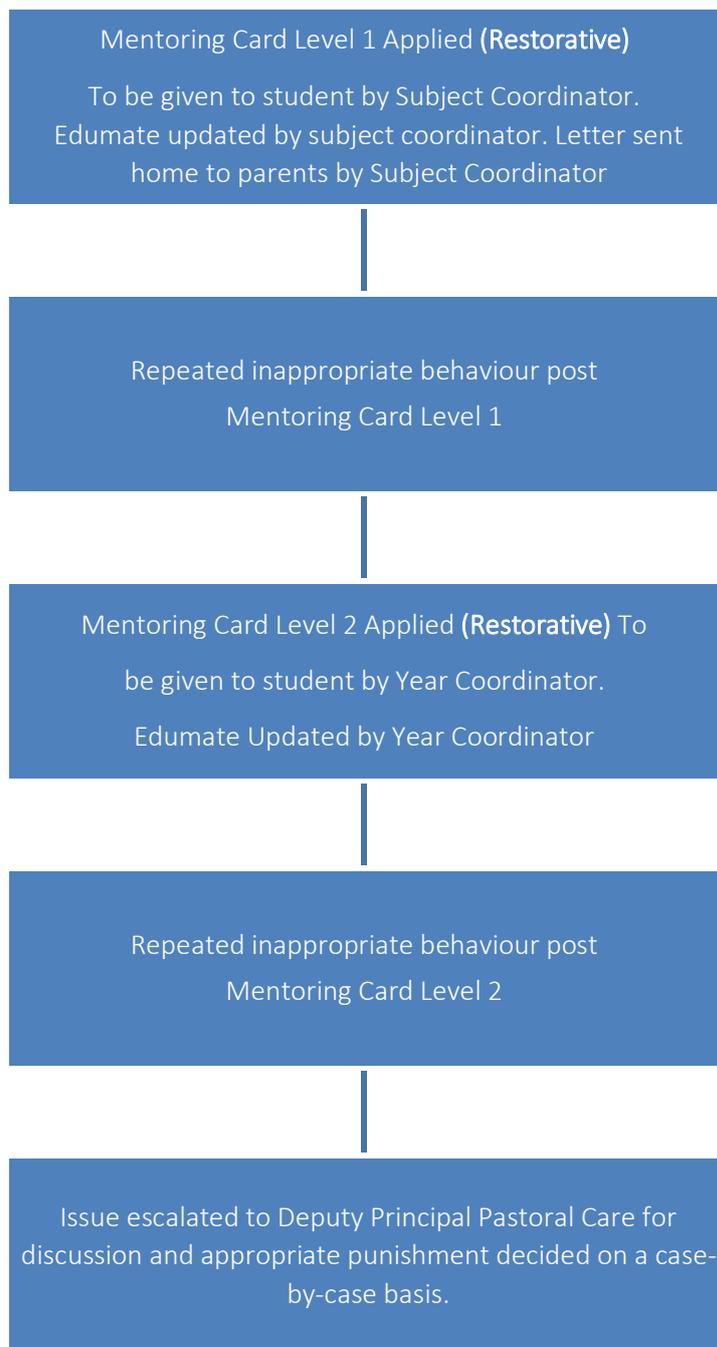
Teacher on Detention Duty is responsible for marking the detention as attended on Edumate

Secondary Administration Coordinator and Office send reminders to non-attenders via email. Non-attendance will result in consequences- in school exclusion or Friday afternoon detention.

Repeated misbehaviour will result in a meeting: Student, subject teacher and coordinator meeting is set and inappropriate behaviour is discussed.

Parents phoned by class teacher or Coordinator.

Repeated inappropriate behaviour by student post meeting with subject coordinator



In addition there will still be a Friday detention for more serious offences, and suspension for persistent or very serious misdemeanours.

Throughout, the emphasis is on classroom management, support for teachers and parents and the use of professional judgment as well as restorative techniques.

Discipline: Procedural fairness

Definitions:

Out of class roster involves the temporary removal from 1 or more subjects that the student would normally attend, for a set period of time. This may be for as little as 1 lesson or for a week. Students work under supervision during this time.

Suspension is a temporary removal of a student from all of the classes that a student would normally attend at a school for a set period of time. At Covenant Christian School this would normally be a 1 or 2 day in-school suspension or, in cases where the safety of other students is in question, an at home suspension.

Expulsion is the permanent removal of a student from one particular school. Only the School Board, on the advice of the Principal, can expel a student from Covenant Christian School. This is an extreme action taken only after significant consultation with the student, parents and any counsellors or Pastoral Care Coordinators involved. It would normally only occur if a student had been on previous suspensions and no improvement in behaviour was seen after all the discipline and counselling options were exhausted. The student and parents would have been made aware that this was the next step in the discipline procedure and all parties would have met several times.

*Exclusion is the act of preventing a student's admission to a number of schools. This form of discipline is not applicable to Covenant Christian School.

In all our dealings with parents and students in our community we aim to cover our moral, spiritual and legal responsibilities. Procedural fairness in matters of discipline involves the following legal obligations towards a person against whom an allegation has been made:

The right to:

- know the allegations related to a specific matter and any other information which will be taken into account in considering the matter
- know the process by which the matter will be considered
- respond to the allegations
- know how to seek a review of the decision made in response to the allegations.

In addition, the investigation must be impartial and without bias by those making both the allegation and the decision.

The school's Discipline Policy and Grievance policy are readily available on the school website to parents and caregivers. <http://www.covenant.nsw.edu.au/community/forms-policies.html>.

When serious discipline matters (i.e. suspension or exclusion) are discussed it is our practice to call the parents in to a meeting. Phone, email and / or letter are used for this. A meeting will be arranged if the parent wishes to clarify any allegations and to give the students and parents/caregivers the opportunity to speak. Support people may be invited if needed and we are happy to provide translators if required. A brief summary is taken, in writing and kept in the student's files and on Edumate.

Initial investigations are generally carried out by the Pastoral Care Coordinators for the particular year. They would then consult with the Deputy Principal Pastoral care, who would make the final disciplinary decision after the meeting and discussion with the parents.

In more serious cases, the Deputy Principal Pastoral Care would investigate and leave the decision to the Principal. In cases of expulsion from the school, the Deputy Principal Pastoral Care and Principal would confer,

then the decision would be made by the School Board. In cases involving sexual assault or any matter coming under the *Child Protection Act*, a trained investigator would be used. Currently the Deputy Principal Pastoral Care is trained but an outside investigator could also be used.

At all times the student and parents have access to the school or other counsellors, support people and Police Liaison Officers if appropriate.

Contact details for relevant support personnel

School Counsellors and Advisers

- Mrs Deb Redwood - Counsellor and Chaplain: Monday-Tues-Wed
- Mr Richard Grey: Monday- Friday
- Mrs Wendy Gilbert - Career Adviser: Monday, Tuesday and Thursday

Police Liaison

School Liaison Officer

- Senior Constable Dennis Goodwin - 0408 603-257, good2den@police.nsw.gov.au

Youth Liaison Officer

- Senior Constable Robyn Jennings - 9976 8051