



## STUDENT DISCIPLINE

POL-104-001

### 1. INTENTION

To provide guidance for staff, students, parents and guardians on The Alpine School's expectations regarding behaviour management, relationships and disciplinary procedures which are based on the principles of Steiner education and procedural fairness. This is to ensure that a positive and productive growth and learning environment is maintained for all students.

### 2. INTRODUCTION

The school aims to promote the discipline of self-control, cultivate virtuous qualities and act for the wellbeing of others.

Discipline is a response to individuals and situations in such a way as to lead to the development of skills that promote responsibility and accountability. Such responses are different at differing age levels. What is appropriate in Kindergarten will be different in the Primary or Secondary school. Through recognition of the implications of the stages of child development (as given by Rudolf Steiner) certain forms and rhythms are set in place so that the individuality of the child is protected and safety is ensured.

The rhythms that are established may include the daily and weekly rhythms of the timetable, the Main Lesson subject, the seasonal celebrations, or how many times per day the teacher shakes students' hands. Form may include the school's accepted social manners and etiquette, the structure of sitting in a circle at the beginning of the school day, attendance, type of food brought to school, the act of shaking the teacher's hand or the way the school day begins and ends (things that uphold the school's ethos and values). These rhythms and forms encourage the progression from outer discipline (as in Kindergarten, where through imitation the child is enfolded in a form totally conceived by the teacher) to inner (self) discipline as the child matures, culminating in adulthood.

Wherever possible a child should not be shamed in front of others but instead inspired to act in an appropriate manner while ensuring in the eyes of others that justice has been done.

The discipline between teacher and child will best operate if the teacher inspires a rich appreciation of the wholeness and beauty of the world i.e. if a reverent and artistic dimension to life is nurtured. The imparting of knowledge and the inspiration for learning should be thought of as an art in themselves. Also, in Steiner Education the teacher typically has an unquestioned authority that arises quite naturally and is developed over time with their class. This authority is not expressed in a fixed way, but is creative and mobile, changing to meet new situations as the child grows older.

The forms and rhythms created by the Class Teacher provide a sense of security as students know what happens and when. This protects and nurtures the child while allowing spontaneity and expression of individuality.

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### 3. DEFINITIONS

**Suspension** – the temporary withdrawal of the student from attending school to a maximum of 20 days (4 weeks)

**Expulsion** – the permanent withdrawal of the student from enrolment at school

**Exclusion** – the temporary withdrawal of the student from participating in normal activities while still attending school

**Procedural Fairness** - Procedural fairness refers to what is sometimes described as the ‘hearing rule’ and the ‘right to an unbiased decision’.

The ‘**hearing rule**’ includes the right of the person against whom an allegation has been made 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.

The ‘**right to an unbiased decision**’ includes the right to:

- impartiality in an investigation and decision making;
- an absence of bias by a decision-maker, and
- the review mechanism adds to the fairness of the process.

### 4. POLICY

#### 4.1. Scope

This policy applies to all staff, students, parents and guardians of the school. This policy will be made available to staff during their induction and to parents and guardians at any time upon request.

#### 4.2. Expectations

Students, parents and staff of the school are to be treated with respect at all times, including when behaviour management and disciplinary actions are being carried out. Under no circumstance, are practices of humiliation or being made an example of to be used.

Staff of the school will aim to instil in the students a sense of responsibility for their own actions by creating an honest and open approach to behaviour management and discipline.

Student behaviour may be recorded on the student’s file for the purposes of keeping a record and implementing long term behaviour management strategies. However, daily behaviour is to be assessed daily and wherever

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possible not carried over into the next day. Staff of the school will aim to encourage the idea that each day is a new opportunity regardless of what happened prior.

Students are required to abide by the POL-111-004 Student Code of Conduct and to follow the directions of teachers and other people with authority delegated by the school.

### 4.3. Disciplinary Action

Where a student disregards rules, instructions or otherwise engages in conduct which causes or may cause harm or undue disturbance to the school, staff members or other students, the student may be subject to disciplinary action and required to engage in considered restorative practices.

The disciplinary procedures undertaken and restorative practices required by the school vary according to the incident. When advised of an allegation, the student and parents or guardians will be informed of the procedural steps to be followed in dealing with the matter. In relation to all matters to be investigated, the student will be informed of the nature of the allegation and given an opportunity to respond to the allegations, as outlined above by the 'hearing rule'.

The consequences will vary according to the behaviour of the student. Students will be supported to address their behaviour through considered restorative practices under the guidance of the Class Teacher. At the lower end of the scale, removing the student for quiet time to reflect may be appropriate. At the upper end of the scale, the behaviour could result in suspension or expulsion. It is to be encouraged where possible that the Class Teacher take time to reflect on the underlying cause of the behaviour in question and attempt then to deal with the cause first before initiating disciplinary action.

**Under no circumstances is corporal punishment permitted. The Alpine School does not explicitly or implicitly sanction the administering of corporal punishment, including by non-school persons such as parents, to enforce discipline at the school. Where the use of corporal punishment is brought to the attention of the school and constitutes risk of significant harm to the child, notification will be made to the appropriate agencies under Child Protection legislation.**

### 4.4. Disciplinary Interviews

The Principal, Class Teacher or a parent or guardian of a student of the school may request an interview to discuss disciplinary issues regarding a student. A parent or guardian may only request an interview to discuss matters relevant to their child/ren. Proceedings and outcomes of any interviews or discussions are to be recorded by the Principal or their nominee and kept on the student's file.

Parents and guardians may choose to have a support person or observer attend a formal interview or discussion relating to the discipline of their child/ren. The parent or guardian must notify the Principal or Class Teacher (whoever is holding the interview) of their decision to do so, and provide the name of the support person and their relationship to the student, prior to the scheduled interview.

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The school will make available interpreter services at disciplinary interviews where required. When interpreter services are used in a disciplinary interview, their name and contact details are to be recorded by the Principal (or their nominee).

Parents and guardians are able to appeal or apply for a review of preliminary disciplinary decisions that have been made regarding their child/ren. Appeals and reviews are handled following the principles of procedural fairness and are to be heard by a responsible person(s) other than those responsible for the original decision. Proceedings and outcomes of the appeal are to be recorded by the Principal (or their nominee) and kept on the student's file.

### 5. PROCEDURE

#### 5.1. Suspension and Expulsion

Should the situation arise where a student is to be considered for suspension or expulsion, the following procedure is to be followed:

- a) The Class Teacher or teacher on duty is to report the incident to the Principal or their nominee. If students observe the incident, they are to report it to the class teacher or teacher on duty.
- b) An appointment time is to be set up with all parties involved where the Principal conducts an interview of relevant parties and follows steps to ensure there is a process of 'procedural fairness'.

Basic steps for Procedural Fairness:

- a) Outline the alleged behaviour
- b) Allow the student to respond
- c) Consider the response
- d) Indicate the school's view and likely action to the student and parents/guardians
- e) Consider any further comment or appeal particularly in relation to suspension, expulsion or exclusion
- f) Make a final decision

The Principal or their nominee will reach a preliminary decision in relation to the allegation and any consequences to be imposed and advise the student and parents or guardians of that view. The student and parents or guardians should be advised that if they wish to appeal or review this preliminary decision, they are required to make an application for a review to the Principal or their nominee and submit any information they want to be considered during the review process. Appeals and reviews are handled following the principles of procedural fairness and are to be heard by a responsible person(s) other than those responsible for the original decision.

Where the incident is severe or involves a student with violent behaviour, the student may be immediately suspended. For students in classes K – 1 the word suspension may be replaced with the words, "sent home". The behaviour should be recorded in FR-104-003 Behaviour Incident Report Form and kept in the student's file.

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It is important to consider individual circumstances, and in some cases being excluded from particular activities or the student's own class may be more effective. The aim should be to educate the child so as to prevent the behaviour from reoccurring.

Where required, the Principal or their delegate should meet with the student and parents/guardians to set out conditions for the student continuing at school. Records of the meeting are to be taken and kept in the student's file.

Any further aggressive or violent behaviour may result in a further suspension. (Repeat Steps for Procedural Fairness above)

In cases where there is a conflict of interest between the parties involved in the process, assistance can be called on from the Principal or the Board of Directors.

### 5.2. Behavioural Management and Discipline Policy Guidelines

Most behavioural difficulties will be worked with in the classroom. The Teacher works mostly with a creative approach to discipline. The main tool is a very strong rhythm and an imaginative approach to introducing any change throughout the day, e.g. all transition periods are carried by verses and songs. Another tool to resolve behavioural difficulties is to bring a strong message through a story told by the Teacher for a whole week.

The young child lives in the present and can have a limited understanding of consequences. One needs to respond to a disruptive action immediately in a clear and simple way. Explanations and justification often create confusion in the child and place undue burden on them, entering them into the adult world of responsibility before their time. If a child hurts someone else, he or she should be encouraged to care for that person.

Teachers can respond to an unacceptable behaviour or action by:

- redirecting the child's energy e.g. encourage the child to play with someone else, give the child a job;
- keeping the child with them;
- removing the child from the playground or room for a certain time (with supervision); and
- if behaviour continues, meet with and speak to parents or guardians.

If difficulties persist after taking these approaches, the following steps will be in place:

STEP 1 - Bring child close to the Teacher to ensure other children are safe

STEP 2 - Find more appropriate tasks for the child

STEP 3 - Inform parents/guardians – arrange a meeting to discuss another approach

STEP 4 - In rare cases, it might be necessary to send a child home, eg if other children are endangered.

The Class Teacher will discuss difficulties in pedagogical/staff meetings to seek support. In some cases, the support of an extra lesson might be beneficial or the referral to other Specialists outside of the school.

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