

## BEHAVIOUR MANAGEMENT POLICY

At Alice Miller, which includes Candlebark School, we wish to support each child's holistic growth and we are especially concerned with the ways in which respect for ourselves and others can build successful relationships. Our aim is to focus upon and celebrate the positive moments and times which our children experience – experiences which demonstrate initiative, responsibility, thoughtfulness, empathy, success, confidence, enjoyment of learning, self-discipline, and co-operation.

For most problems that occur, we adopt a policy that relies not upon punishment but upon negotiation, conflict resolution, mediation and problem solving as essential skills that our students will learn and actively practise.

Students will work together with teachers to develop ground rules and consequences, whilst all rules having legal and safety implications will be adults' responsibilities.

We are concerned about the personal growth of each student: helping him or her to develop responsibility in a friendly, caring and orderly environment. This means allowing students to make mistakes, because that is part of being human. Schools should be safe places in which mistakes can be made so that learning can be experienced. If we care about our students, we'll help them to learn from their mistakes by giving them time to reflect on this behaviour and work out ways of behaving differently, and to experience the logical consequences of inappropriate behaviour. At the same time, the discipline system assists teachers in maintaining a non-disruptive environment where all students can learn to the best of their ability.

It must also be noted that there are situations which assume such a serious aspect that the preceding approach is rendered inappropriate or invalid, as discussed further below.

Alice Miller School's approach to discipline is based on a philosophy which promotes respect and care for each person. Each student is to be treated fairly, justly and with understanding, and we encourage students to treat staff members in a similar manner.

### THE KEY PRINCIPLES OF THE DISCIPLINE SYSTEM

1. Every student has a right to uninterrupted learning, play and social interaction at this school, which means that no student has the right to disrupt the learning, play or social interaction of others. This includes online learning and online social interaction.
2. Confidence is to be encouraged throughout the learning process; as such confidence is essential for effective learning to occur. It follows from this that teachers emphasise encouragement and avoid 'put-downs' and sarcasm in their relations with students.
3. Each teacher is responsible for the decisions made in the organisation of students in his/her care. Consequently, the teacher is 'in charge', and students have no right to defy decisions, especially in regard to safety. At the appropriate time, students have the right to question the fairness of a decision and be heard, but not necessarily at the point of its implementation.
4. Even though the teacher is always in charge of discipline, students generally learn best, and grow in self-esteem when democratic principles are applied by teachers in learning situations. Such principles include the promotion of mutual trust and respect, the provision of choice, motivation through encouragement, freedom within limits, joint goal-setting, co-operative learning and self-discipline. This approach avoids on the one hand, a permissive style where students do what they want without concern for others, or on the other hand, an autocratic approach which attempts control through reward and punishment, through

focusing on weaknesses, or through excessive competition; and which ultimately promotes dependency and/or outright rebellion.

5. Some classroom behaviour problems are prevented or limited by effective teaching preparation such as ensuring variety in presentation, providing appropriate levels of work, accommodating individual learning rates, maintaining reasonable consistency in applying discipline measures, learning students' names and in general by acting in ways which have always been and which continue to be consistent with the best teaching practice.
6. Student misbehaviour occurs for different motives: the most common being unresolved issues with parents, attention seeking, revenge, a struggle for popularity, power and/or control, and/or a display of inadequacy. These different motives, once recognised, require different discipline strategies.
7. The eventual aim is always for students to develop and take responsibility for their own learning and behaviour in the school situation. Consequently, the discipline system is not expressed as a complete set of rules with consequences for breaking those rules. Instead, we expect and encourage students to act appropriately in all situations regardless of whether specific rules apply.
8. Alice Miller School does not attempt to have a stipulated set of punishments for specified offences. Instead, the school treats each student and each set of circumstances on their individual merits, and, in considering disciplinary matters, reserves the right to take into account the student's past record, personal circumstances, degree of understanding and awareness of the nature of the offence, efforts at restitution, and other mitigating or aggravating factors. In short, a "case-by-case basis" is adopted.

## THE DISCIPLINE SYSTEM IN PRACTICE

According to Dinkmeyer and McKay (1983) children have four main goals in misbehaving: (See STEP Parent's Guide p.19): Attention, Power, Revenge, Display of Inadequacy.

Teachers and parents need to try and avoid 'rewarding' such misbehaviour by responding in 'usual' ways. Instead, we can assist students to modify their misbehaviour by responding as follows:

- Never give attention on demand – not even for useful behaviour. Give positive attention at other times.
- Bow out of power struggles. Avoid getting 'hooked'. Let the student experience the consequences of misbehaviour and/or try to enlist the student's assistance so her/his power can be used constructively.
- Avoid feeling hurt. Recognise that the student is possibly projecting feelings from other situations or relationships, and/or seeking revenge and instead of seeking revenge in turn or getting drawn into this drama, work to build a relationship based on trust.
- Avoid agreeing with the student displaying 'inadequacy': without criticising and 'put downs' encourage and point out any positive efforts the student has made. Research indicates that optimistic students progress further, and at a faster rate, than pessimistic students.

### Being Positive in Language

Our discipline system seeks to promote self-discipline in our students: we want them to discover that the logical consequences of misbehaviour are that they are the ones who suffer if learning doesn't occur. Our task is to keep reminding students - as calmly as possible - of the logical consequences of what they do. It can sometimes be helpful to remind ourselves that much student misbehaviour is a cry of pain that they are not coping; and they need to be shown that there are more appropriate ways of having needs met. The language of this approach uses such phrases as 'not coping yet' instead of put downs; 'appropriate and inappropriate' behaviour instead of 'rights and wrongs' etc.

## **Classroom Strategies**

This is the heart of our system where teachers and students co-operate in the process of maintaining a busy, focussed, friendly and supportive classroom environment whilst maintaining student self-esteem.

Instances of misbehaviour which are unacceptable include:

- Inappropriate talking
- Not paying attention when the teacher is explaining things
- Impoliteness
- Inappropriate use of furniture
- Calling out in class
- Throwing things in class

In these instances, after taking into account the likely motives for misbehaviour, and whether it is the student or the teacher who 'owns' the problem, teachers may implement one or more of the following approved procedures to maintain order.

### **Approaches for initial instances of misbehaviour**

Using least obtrusive approaches wherever possible e.g. using a low pitched voice, saying the student's name, using a gesture to indicate the problem (or as few words as possible), and then moving straight on with teaching (providing the student with some 'take-up' time) – 'Mavis, facing this way, thanks. Now Shakespeare writes...' (Teacher proceeds with lesson.)

Referring to the General Classroom Guidelines e.g. 'You know the way we do things here, Mavis, we leave the classroom tidy for the classes which come after us' or referring to rules negotiated with the particular class e.g. 'You know what our class agreed on, Mavis...'

Tactical ignoring e.g. when a student swears unobtrusively to themselves after dropping something.

Reflective listening – 'You seem troubled, today, Mavis? Are things not going so well?'

The use of I-messages – 'When you run like that past the Amenities Block, Mavis, I get concerned about the safety of people coming out of the door.'

### **Approaches for repeated misbehaviour**

Providing choices – 'I'm concerned about that chair, Rupert. You have the choice of sitting on it appropriately, or you'll need to see what it's like without a chair'.

Implementing Logical Consequences – 'Rupert, since you can't seem to stop interfering with Hector, you'll have to sit on your own for the rest of this session'.

Establishing learning contracts with students.

Implementing personal detentions as a logical consequence of non-completion of work – 'Since you didn't finish that exercise in class, you'll have to do it at recess'.

Referring the student to other members of staff.

### **School Wide Classroom Guidelines**

As an aid to the 'approved strategies', classroom teachers will, in the establishment phase of the year, remind students of the School Wide Guidelines. They don't need to be laboured, but students need to be clear about these expectations. Classroom teachers may periodically refer to the guidelines as a way of establishing orderly procedures within class lessons. They may be supplemented with other

negotiated rules appropriate to particular subjects, and students need to be clear that quite a few other expectations are held of them within the total school context e.g. guidelines for appropriate behaviour in the bush, guidelines concerning clean-up etc.

### **The List of School Wide Classroom Guidelines**

When entering classrooms, we:

- Avoid pushing and shoving others.
- Sit quietly, and wait for the teacher's first instructions. (We recognise that it is not appropriate to ask questions or move furniture until this time)

During class lessons, we:

- Raise our hands and wait for acknowledgment from the teacher if we need to contribute.
- Maintain appropriate noise levels.
- Listen quietly and attentively while others are speaking.
- Bring and use required equipment for each class.
- Look after school furniture and equipment at all times.
- Avoid wandering around the room without permission

When leaving classes, we:

- Leave when told to do so by the teacher, and place our chairs under desks Replace any furniture, which has been moved from its usual position.
- Pick up all litter.
- Leave in an orderly fashion.

It should be emphasised that, like most other schools, the responsibility for good behaviour, inclusive attitudes, courtesy and adherence to rules at Alice Miller School belongs to the teachers, the other adults who work in the school community, and ultimately the Principal. If a student is consistently ignoring or defying the conventions and rules under which the school runs, and the normal management tactics are not working, the student should be referred in the first instance to the teacher responsible for that particular grade.

It may be appropriate for the grade teacher to meet with the student and/or his or her parents, to discuss the problems. Other strategies which may be considered (all of which have been employed at different times in the past, at Alice Miller/Candlebark) are asking the student to write a factual and reflective account of the events or events (as the basis for further conversation and exploration), placing the student "on report", having a student meet with a panel of teachers (or all the student's teachers) to give the student a global perspective, having a teacher sit in on the class to observe the student's behaviour (useful amongst other things for establishing benchmarks for improvement), meeting with the student and all other students who are being significantly affected by his or her behaviour.

Should further intervention be considered appropriate, the student can be referred to the Principal. Among the strategies open to the Principal are those outlined above, but also: referring the student for counselling, suspension of the student, or expulsion of the student. These three strategies are not the responsibility of anyone but the Principal.

### **PROCEDURES FOR SUSPENSION/EXPULSION**

**\*Suspension:** Complete removal from the school community (suspension) may be appropriate for students who, by their actions, interfere with the welfare or hinder the learning of others. In this context, the meta-analysis by Professor John Hattie showing a 20% shortfall in academic achievement by classes in which a student is consistently misbehaving should be noted. Other measures which may

incur suspension include refusal to co-operate with discipline measures applied by teachers, breaking a behaviour contract, being caught using or in possession of alcohol, drugs or tobacco, bringing dangerous or illegal weapons to school, or engaging in behaviour endangering, humiliating, embarrassing, harassing, bullying, or otherwise tormenting others.

If suspended, the student may be removed from the school community for a designated period of time, usually two days to a week depending on the severity of the issue, and parents contacted immediately by telephone or text message. Police involvement may also be appropriate. After the suspension period, the following procedure will normally apply:

### **Post Suspension Procedure**

Under most circumstances the student may only return to school after suspension if accompanied for a meeting with the Principal or Head of Campus by a parent or guardian. At this meeting, a post-suspension agreement is to be negotiated with the student. This spells out the conditions upon which the student may return to school. Non-negotiable conditions may include being on a Behaviour Plan card (including the threat of further suspension) for at least a fortnight after returning, and regular meetings with an agreed teacher to discuss progress during this probationary period. Other non-negotiable conditions may include such things as agreeing to visit a professional counsellor, taking prescribed medication, and refraining from the behaviour which led to the suspension.

Negotiable areas may include the name of the teacher who meets regularly with the student, and various administrative details.

After successfully negotiating the probation period, the student can “come off” the Behaviour Plan and resume classes as normal.

**\*EXPULSION:** Expulsion from the school may be appropriate for students who, by their actions, interfere with the welfare or hinder the learning of others. Other measures which may incur expulsion include refusal to co-operate with discipline measures applied by teachers, breaking a behaviour contract, being caught using or in possession of alcohol, drugs or tobacco, bringing dangerous or illegal weapons to school, or engaging in behaviour endangering, humiliating, embarrassing, harassing, bullying, or otherwise tormenting others. Police involvement may also be appropriate.

It should be noted that Victorian law, gives independent schools like Alice Miller School the power to suspend, expel or punish a student. The power derives from the agreement between the school and the parents that their child will obey the rules and regulations of the school

(See also Equal Opportunity, Anti-Harassment and Bullying Policy, and the Complaints Grievances and Appeals Policy, below)

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