

Student Wellbeing & Discipline Policy

"The integral formation of the human resource is the purpose of education..... developing strong and responsible individuals, who are capable of making free and correct choices."

Lay Catholics: Witness to Faith, n.17

Rationale

St. Elizabeth's School is a Catholic Parish Primary School committed to the development of the whole person and to the provision of a school environment that nurtures the growth of all individuals towards full maturity as participating members of the community.

St Elizabeth's Parish School is a school which recognises the innate goodness of every individual. Our policies and practice embrace this belief and aim to assist students in growth towards healthy autonomy. At all times the valuable partnership which exists between home and school is valued and promoted and parents play a vital role in the education of their children. Through the application of this **Student Welfare and Discipline Policy** we aim to support our students in becoming responsible, resourceful, respectful and responsive human beings. In promoting the establishment of appropriate values and the development of appropriate understandings about life, people and relationships we believe we assist our students to look forward to, with optimism and hope, a bright, positive and successful future.

Goals

The goals of our approach to student welfare and discipline are:

- Create a school environment which demonstrates a commitment to the following values:
 - Cooperation
 - Self Discipline
 - Shared Responsibility
 - Mutual Respect
 - Social Equality
- Provide students with the opportunities to develop the skills, knowledge, values and attitudes that will enable them to participate fully and effectively in society and the workplace.
- Support students to appreciate individual difference and develop an understanding and appreciation of different cultures and lifestyles existing in the community and the wider Australian society.
- Provide an environment that promotes a healthy self esteem, confidence and a sense of responsibility for self.
- Provide experiences whereby students gain a feeling of self worth, develop confidence in their individual identity and grow toward self discipline.
- Provide a school environment in which all students are able to participate and feel safe, welcome and valued for their contribution and effort.
- Develop practices which enable every individual to develop to his/her full potential.

Principles

We believe our goals are best achieved through the establishment of a school climate that promotes the development of 4Rs in students:

- **RESPECT** - Believing that all people have equal worth and equal claim to being treated with dignity and kindness.
Our students are encouraged to have consideration for the feelings of others. They are expected to treat others fairly and to expect respect in return. We believe that students become respectful when treated with respect.

- **RESPONSIBILITY** - Accepting one's accountability, not blaming others, becoming reliable and trustworthy and seeing themselves as a primary cause of their own decisions and actions.
Our students are encouraged to develop self control and self dependability. They are encouraged to contribute to the well being of the school, to be helpful and to participate willingly in the life of the school. We believe that students become responsible when given responsibility
- **RESPONSIVENESS** - Having concern and caring for others and cooperating with them, evoking a strong sensitivity to the feelings of self and others as well as an empathetic awareness of family, school, community, nation and world.
Our students are encouraged to be friendly, cooperative, loving and affirming. We believe that students become responsive when treated fairly with love and respect.
- **RESOURCEFULNESS** - making use of one's talents and skills, fostering the ability to devise innovative ways of meeting new situations, seeing these as a positive challenge and using internal resources as well as the assistance of others to solve problems.
Our students are encouraged to take care of themselves, to develop independence and self reliance, to develop their relationships across a broad range of people and to meet the challenges which confront them with confidence. We believe that students become resourceful when permitted to solve life's challenges.

In stating the above principles we recognise the importance of the development of a healthy and confident self-image, a sense of belonging and the fostering of authentic self discipline.

"Self esteem is a quiet sense of self respect, a feeling of self worth....With high self esteem you don't waste your time impressing others; you already know you have value."

Assumptions underlying behaviour

Our beliefs about, and understandings of, student behaviour at St Elizabeth's School reflect the psychology of Alfred Adler (1870 – 1937) titled Individual Psychology. The following principles provide the basis for our beliefs about behaviour;

- Belonging is the most innate need
- All behaviour has social meaning
- Behaviour exists for a purpose
- Humans are essentially active decision makers
- "Lifestyle" (an individual's cognitive belief about how he/she belongs) is unique and unified.
- Discouragement underlies all inappropriate behaviour

Inappropriate Behaviour

At St Elizabeth's Parish School we believe that inappropriate behaviour is behaviour that violates self, others or the social order. It should not be confused with a lack of skill or behaviour students are not aware is inappropriate.

We believe that behaviour is goal oriented and that it exists for a purpose and seek to gain a particular reaction/response from the individuals to whom it is directed. There are four goals of inappropriate behaviour and in descending order each represents a growing discouragement and decreasing self esteem in the student.

The four goals of inappropriate behaviour are:

- Attention
- Power
- Revenge
- Withdrawal

Examining an individual's feelings and reactions to inappropriate behaviour can identify goals of the inappropriate behaviour. An individual's reaction to the inappropriate behaviour may be in line with the purpose for which the behaviour exists. Reacting to inappropriate behaviour therefore may reinforce that behaviour. Teachers will act upon rather than react to behaviour deemed to be inappropriate by ensuring consequence for choice.

Encouragement

At St Elizabeth's Parish School we believe in the innate goodness of every human being and uphold the unconditional acceptance of each individual. In supporting a strong sense of belonging for all within the community we maintain the following beliefs and principles;

- An encouraged person possesses the courage to accept him/herself unconditionally
- To encourage means to give heart to a person
- Encouragement is different to praise; encouragement recognises contribution and effort while praise is an external reward for a well done task.
- Discouragement underlies all inappropriate behaviour.

In our efforts to promote belonging through encouragement we recognise that there are three common sources of discouragement which we seek to minimise in our school

1. Mistake centred approaches
2. Conditional acceptance
3. Competition

As professional educators we recognise our responsibility to support our students to develop responsible behaviour through maintaining the following beliefs and practices;

- Fostering the values of justice, love and respect by modelling appropriate behaviour and developing warm, supportive and positive relationships with students
- Developing close partnerships between home and school and supporting parents in their understanding of relevant school philosophy, policy and practice.
- Displaying sensitivity to the home environment and the effects critical family events have on a students' behaviour
- Establishing and maintaining high expectations of student behaviour
- Promoting self discipline through the establishment and application of consequence for choice.
- Identifying and acknowledging appropriate behaviour using encouragement.
- Providing class meetings as a forum for the discussion of issues of student/teacher concern, a vehicle for group decision making and the establishment of social order i.e. agreed behavioural expectations.
- Maintaining a school and classroom climate which promotes personal growth and positive self esteem for all.
- Establishing a school and classroom climate which promotes cooperation rather than competition.
- Establishing a school and classroom climate which is safe, structured and orderly.

The Language of Encouragement

We promote a strong sense of attachment and belonging for all students by engaging in the following encouragement strategies;

- Having realistic expectations
- Giving responsibility
- Valuing risk taking
- Teaching new skills
- Building on assets and strengths
- Minimising mistakes
- Emphasising process not product; the activity rather than the result.
- Unconditional acceptance.

Consequences for behaviour

At St Elizabeth's Parish School we believe that responsible behaviour develops when students are given the opportunity to make choices and experience the consequences of those choices. We believe that this practice stimulates students to become more responsible for their individual behaviour and increases self discipline.

There are two types of consequences;

1. Natural = reflect the reality of the situation
2. Logical = reflect the reality of the social order; the agreed expectations of behaviour

Natural consequences represent the routine effects of reality of the natural flow of events without interference from teachers eg. a student who fails to return a parental permission slip cannot go on an excursion, a student who continually leaves his/her lunch at home goes hungry. It is the natural order or reality of the situation which impresses the student, the teacher is not involved and adopts the role of the friendly bystander; "I am sorry that you cannot go on the excursion but you know what to do for the future."

Logical consequences are guided and arranged by the teacher in consultation with the class group and allow the reality of the social order to impress the child rather than the authority of the teacher. Consequences are appropriately utilised when the student has prior knowledge that his/her choice will result in a particular consequence. C

Consequences when applied effectively satisfy the following criteria;

- Reasonable....uncomfortable, unpleasant but not extreme, suffering is not conducive to the learning process
- Related...logically related to the behaviour, makes sense
- Respectful...no moral judgement implied, treats student with dignity and respect

Class Meetings

At St Elizabeth's Parish School we believe that class meetings are the vehicle for decision making in our classrooms. We believe that joint decision making between teachers and students makes fosters shared responsibility and cooperation and promotes all of the values which underlie our student welfare and discipline policy. We recognise in our democratic classrooms that the authority of the group replaces the authority of the adult but maintain the teacher as an important leader of the group.

Class Meetings aim to;

- Assist students to understand themselves and each other
- Stimulate students to help each other
- Establish the social order (group rules) of the class
- Establish the consequences for inappropriate behaviour

Meetings comprise a balance of;

- Encouragement
- Planning
- Problem Solving
- Training

The specific guidelines for running classroom meetings that must be adhered to are;

- Group consensus is essential
- Meetings should comprise a balance of Encouragement, Planning, Problem Solving and Training
- Class Meetings for senior students are held weekly for 30 minutes
- Class Meetings for junior students are held 2 – 3 times weekly for 10 – 15 minutes.
- Meet at regularly scheduled times and adhere to time limits
- When problem solving issues are pinpointed and discussed not events
- When problem-solving issues should not be personalised and names should not be used.
- Don't allow monopolisers
- The teacher should be an equal member of the group
- Encouragement may be personalised and names used
- Agendas should be compiled before each meeting and minutes of the meeting kept
- Evaluate meetings periodically
- Put agreements into action

Individual Action Plans

At St Elizabeth's Parish School we recognise that individual students may require specialised support as they strive to meet the challenges that confront them at school and in making appropriate choices about their behaviour. Individual Action Plans are developed for students who are, as a result of the referral process/protocol in the school, identified as "at risk" due to repeated inappropriate behaviour. An Individual Action Plan is developed in the context of a Student Support Group and is, therefore, developed in conjunction with the individual student and the parents/guardians of that student. The aim of the Individual Action Plan is to provide a student with focussed and intensive assistance to address the issues of self esteem and responsible behaviour.

An Individual Action Plan is goal oriented and addresses targetted inappropriate behaviour. The Individual Action Plan has a major emphasis on encouragement and is aimed to build a student's self esteem and consequently modify the motivation for inappropriate behaviour. Whilst encouragement is the focus the student is held accountable for inappropriate decisions which result in inappropriate behaviour and agreed consequences apply.

The Individual Action Plan has a duration of 2 weeks. Contact is made with parents/guardians at the end of the first week to discuss progress towards goal achievement and a formal evaluation meeting is held at the end of the second week. The student may attend this meeting. The Student Support Group will make decisions about discontinuation, continuation and/or modification of the plan. It is not intended that the Individual Action Plan be an ongoing feature of support for the student.

Healthy people see themselves as liked, wanted, accepted, able and worthy. Not only do they feel they are people of dignity and worth, but they behave as though they were.

Hamachek (1976)