

INTERNATIONAL CHINESE SCHOOL



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WELFARE POLICY

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"SPEAKING THE TRUTH IN LOVE,
WE WILL IN ALL THINGS GROW UP IN HIM
WHO IS THE HEAD, THAT IS CHRIST."

EPHESIANS 4:15

A part of the Welfare Policy is the INTERNATIONAL CHINESE SCHOOL Policy for Dealing with Bullying and Harassment which, while it forms a part of the Welfare Policy, is a separate document, because it is primarily a practical "hands on" text.

WELFARE POLICY

The Welfare Policy of the International Chinese School is grounded in the broad aim of bringing all things under the Lordship of Christ. Given that our relationships with and behavior towards God and each other are inevitably flawed, we acknowledge this to be a challenging task.

Students are guided in their learning to work out a faithful and obedient response to God and His world. This aim is equally applicable to the learning of concepts and skills, the dynamic relationships that form part of that learning, and activities and relationships outside the classroom. A Welfare Policy chiefly addresses those relationships.

Under God primary responsibility for the upbringing and education of children lies with their parents. Therefore, teachers work in partnership with parents to guide and direct students to develop self-control and ultimately self-discipline, empowering appropriate relationships.

Some rules are necessary to help regulate the social situation that is school. These rules should be minimal, general and a guide to students. They are also a recognition that there is a foolishness inherent in our human nature, and that students need adult guidance in forming their responses. These rules clarify expectations of students in a positive way.

As the community works together to affirm individual members, students will develop increasingly responsible use of freedom. However, reflecting the fallen nature of our world, students will often breach the conditions required for healthy relationships. Discipline is then necessary, with the aim of healing and restoring relationships – whether they be teacher – pupil or pupil – pupil. The reconciling work of the Gospel is an active reality and should result in the acceptance of Godly norms for behaviour.

Where some form of punishment is deemed appropriate, it must be seen as a just result of unwise student choices. It must be the outworking of love and truth, which ultimately builds up the students, does not cause them to stumble and is appropriate to their age. Discipline should not provoke others through unjust or unfair treatment.

The classroom is the focal point of student welfare. Structures should exist to support the creative relationships of the learning situation, but the pupil – teacher relationship remains at the heart of the matter: ministering the redeeming love of Christ to students by encouragement, punishment, guidance and direction and a multitude of other expressions. Experiencing that redemptive love from other students and staff is the best way we can encourage a positive, faithful response from the students. Then, they will truly learn to accept responsibility for their lives, become more self-disciplined in every area, fulfilling their communal obligations and serving Christ Himself.

PROCEDURES

Teacher and Classroom Management

The class teacher, developing relationships with students in a wide variety of situations is the initiator and sustainer of good quality student welfare. Teachers need to be actively involved in the many facets of student welfare.

Within the classroom especially, the class teacher is the consistent administrator of a defacto system of rewards and punishments. A smile or a negative look is often enough to encourage or discourage certain behaviour.

Indeed, there is a strong dependence of the students on the very structuring of the learning environment. Lesson planning, class organisation etc. influence mightily, the nature of their response. All classroom practitioners do well to ask themselves, "Am I structuring my classroom to facilitate the most positive response possible? Is my teaching methodology appropriate?" Often confrontational approaches facilitate no positive outcomes within students, just suppression of negative responses. All staff must therefore develop an understanding of student's behaviour and develop their expertise in classroom management. The school has a part to play in supporting staff in this development.

The foundation of the teacher-pupil relationship lies in the recognition of the balance between truth and love. Truth becomes judgmental without love; love becomes sentimentalised without truth. As we look at appropriate rewards and punishments, classroom structures and the like, the intertwined concepts of Truth and Love must govern our thinking.

How will students know they are loved?

Communicating love to students involves, for a Christian teacher:

- respecting and caring about students as those who are made in the image of God, who have an eternal purpose and who are accountable to God.
- using every possible means available to affirm the student and to encourage; to listen to them; to be prepared to change and adapt teaching methods as the student grows towards maturity.
- catering for students with particular academic, social/emotional and/or physical needs.
- praying specifically and individually for them/with them.
- being prepared to spend out-of-class time with a student to get to know him/her as a person and not just as a student in the teacher's class; to help a student with a problem.
- seeking to understand reasons why a student may not be achieving to his/her potential, or may be misbehaving or appearing depressed etc., and to take the reasons into account when teaching or relating to that student.
- being patient, forgiving and not bearing a grudge. Willing to apologise if the teacher has made a mistake.
- modelling adult Christian behaviour, character and attitudes in all situations, including overtly expressing faith and how it applies to daily living. Setting a good example has a great impact on the students.
- allowing for fundamental differences in each individual, including in the way by which each learns. Being prepared to adapt teaching methods to allow for each child's needs to be met. encouraging cooperation over competition.
- fostering an atmosphere in the classroom, which encourages students to feel safe and secure to experiment with ideas and to discuss problems etc. without fear of ridicule.

How does the structure of the classroom and its management reflect love for the students?

Some practical suggestions:-

- Be enthusiastic about teaching
- Vary lesson strategies
- Prepare all lessons thoroughly and creatively.
- Prepare work suitable to the ages/abilities of the students.
- Be prompt to class.

- Address students by Christian name.
- Establish guidelines for:
 - a) classroom organisation
 - b) entry and dismissal procedures
 - c) bookwork, assignments
 - d) communicating within the class –
 - i) teacher-pupil
 - ii) pupil-pupil
- Move around the room
- Use rewards e.g. verbal; material (merit cards).
- Use eye contact.
- Allow students to hold an opinion/be prepared to listen to that opinion.
- Give warning signals for unacceptable behavior.
- Be fair and consistent in relation to rewards, punishment and marking.
- Balance negative comments with positive comments where appropriate.
- Defuse potential confrontational situations.
- Give students reasons.
- Use teaching methods that encourage co-operation and develop a sense of community more than individualism.

Discipline

Discipline is an integral part of a balanced role in pastorally caring for students. Therefore, wherever possible, each teacher should administer his/her own disciplinary measures. Discipline should be administered in love, not anger, recognizing that many problems may be related to factors external to the situation (e.g. marriage breakup in the child's family).

The process that leads to the imposition of discipline at the School will be procedurally fair. **Procedural fairness** is a basic right when dealing with authorities. All students have the "right to be heard", and the right to an "unbiased decision".

The "right to be heard" includes the right of the person against whom an allegation is 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; and
- 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; and
- An absence of bias in the decision maker.

The review mechanism adds to the fairness of the process and offers a check in case there is a perception of a conflict of interest.

Punishment and Reward

In their behaviour, students are challenged to strive to reflect the character of Christ: gentle towards others, obedient to God, intolerant of injustice and willing to lead others by His example. Like Christ, students are to view all with whom they come into contact as their neighbours, they are to love their

enemies and show respect to those with whom they may disagree. To these ends, students are encouraged to:

- Show respect towards God;
- Show respect towards themselves;
- Show respect towards others; and
- Show respect towards their environment as God's creation.

Reward

The ultimate reward for a student should be the knowledge that they are doing God's will. The faithful response of service to God and other people is a reward in itself. There is also an intrinsic reward in completed work. The end product of a learning process (such as an essay, a meal or a piece of pottery) gives the creator/student a great deal of satisfaction generally. An overly-critical attitude can, of course, destroy that sense of accomplishment. On the other hand, an undiscerning approval can devalue the sense of accomplishment.

External rewards meted out by the teacher can assist in shaping student behaviour. Some possible rewards are:

- displays of work
- merit cards
- the awarding of points towards a teacher's reward
- verbal praise
- individualised evaluation of work
- prize giving

Wherever reward is given, it must not be restricted to academic achievement. Progress in every area must have its reward. Expression and development of individual talents is equally important for less academically-oriented students and more able students, providing opportunity to recognize application as well as achievement.

The reward the School community reaps is the resulting caring environment, a place where students feel safe, secure and affirmed.

Punishment

Students who fail to uphold the behaviour principles of the School (eg. disregards rules; disobeys instruction, engages in conduct that may cause harm; inconvenience or embarrassment to the School; staff or other students) and have been given reasonable opportunity to explain their actions must expect to face the consequences.

The disciplinary procedures undertaken by the School will vary according to the seriousness of the alleged offence. The punishments will vary according to the behaviour and the prior record of the student.

Some possible punishments;

- A full apology
- Picking up papers
- Lunchtime detentions
- Withdrawal of privilege
- Work cards

- Reports to parents
- Meeting the Principal
- Interview with Principal
- Suspension/Expulsion

Note:

1. The writing out of lines is of most dubious disciplinary value. Lines are not to be given as a punishment at this School.
2. Students are not to be sent outside classrooms for long periods of time. This strategy is to be used for a “cooling off” period only.
3. The School expressly prohibits the use of corporal punishment under any circumstances. The International Chinese School does not explicitly or implicitly sanction the administration of corporal punishment by non-school persons, including parents, to enforce discipline at the school.

In severe cases, inappropriate behaviour may lead to suspension or expulsion.

Suspension – the temporary removal of a student from some or all of the classes that a student would normally attend at a school for a set period of time. A suspension could be served at school, ‘in-school suspension’, or out of school (eg. at home). Suspension is determined by the Principal.

Expulsion – the permanent removal of a student from the school – a last resort which is nonetheless sometimes in the best interests of the individual and the other students in the School community. In the event that the reason for expulsion involves criminal acts, the matter will be referred to the appropriate authority, such as the police or child services, who will be entrusted to deal with the matter in the appropriate manner according to the law. Expulsion is determined by the Principal, in consultation with the Board Chairperson.

Exclusion – the School does not make any attempt to exclude a past student from enrolling at another school.

Right of review

The Principal will reach a preliminary decision in relation to the allegation and any penalty to be imposed and advise the student (and parent/s) of that view. The student (and parent/s) would be advised that if they wish this preliminary decision to be reviewed they may make application for a review to the Principal and submit any new information they want to be considered during the review process. The Principal will then either confirm the preliminary decision as final or amend the preliminary decision based on the additional information provided.

Record keeping

Written documentation will be recorded during interviews. Further, significant discipline issues must be recorded on the School’s discipline data-base. If a student is of an age they can write their own account, students should be encouraged to do so, and this should be as close to the time of the offense as possible. Such documentation must be filed as evidence relating to a specific investigation.

Discipline is a natural part of a balanced role in pastoring students. It does not spoil a relationship to discipline a student, it is an integral part of it. Therefore, wherever possible, each teacher should administer his/her own disciplinary measures.

It should be done in love, not anger, recognising that many problems may be related to factors external to the situation (e.g. marriage breakup in the child's family).

Whether students are performing well or in a disappointing manner, communication with parents is crucial and should be done frequently. Parent-teacher interviews and regular written reports are major components of communication, but communication by individual teachers to parents, in writing or by telephone, should also be done as frequently as appropriate. It is difficult for the school to answer the criticism of parents who, upon receiving a poor report for their child, ask "Why was I not informed that he/she was having difficulties before it got to this stage?" Parents should be contacted by the class teachers in a timely manner, for both "good news" and "bad news" occasions.

PROCEDURES FOR DEALING WITH INAPPROPRIATE &/or ANTI-SOCIAL &/or BULLYING (as per Discipline section of Welfare Policy)

Step 1 (less serious issues)

- Dealt with on the spot by attending staff member.
- The staff member/teacher on duty is to deal with unhelpful behaviour and apply appropriate, immediate consequences.
- If necessary this incident will be referred to Step 2.



Step 2 (pattern of repeat offences and/or more serious issues)

- Dealt with on the spot by attending staff member.
- The staff member/teacher on duty is to deal with unhelpful behaviour and apply appropriate, immediate consequences.
- The student should be required to remain with the duty teacher.
- The incident is then referred to the relevant classroom teacher, and entered on the school discipline database.
- Parents informed via email or phone or in person.
- If necessary this incident will be referred to Step 3.



Step 3

- Student interviewed by Principal where the issue is discussed and entered on the school discipline database.
- If related to bullying an apology to the victim is sought and the bully is made aware that the bullying must stop.
- If related to break times the student may be removed from the playground.
- Parents informed by phone or in person, and in the case of bullying the parents of both parties.
- If necessary this incident will be referred to Step 4.



Step 4

- Parents are requested to come to the School for interview.
- Consequences determined as appropriate.
- Student placed on 'Blue Card' to monitor behaviour.
- Counselling may be recommended if appropriate.
- Report entered on the school discipline database.
- If necessary this bullying incident will be referred to Step 5.



Step 5

- If a student reaches this stage, the principal will interpret this to mean that the student has chosen through his/her actions to exclude him/herself from the School. Suspension may result. This may be an in-school suspension, or full suspension. The School reserves the right to assess each situation on its merits. Degrees of inappropriate &/or bullying behaviour will be taken into account. Severe incidents will be dealt with in the most appropriate way.
- Counselling is strongly recommended.
- Report recorded in student management system.
- If necessary this bullying incident will be referred to Step 6.



Step 6

- If a student reaches this stage, the Principal will interpret this to mean that the student has chosen through his/her actions to exclude him/herself from the School. This will result in a full suspension, or expulsion in extreme circumstances. If the student returns to the School, parents and student must meet with Principal prior to re-entering class. Student may be placed on a conditional enrolment.

These 'Steps' need not be followed sequentially. For instance serious matters may be escalated through the process, bypassing lower level steps as deemed appropriate. Alternatively a child, who may have been dealt with at a higher level, may receive lower level discipline for minor infractions. While personal situations of students will be taken into account, consequences will still flow from inappropriate behaviour. Consequences may flow from 'accidental' behaviour in an attempt to foster within students awareness for others and their surroundings.

The School reserves the right to assess each situation on its merits. Degrees of inappropriate and/or anti-social and/or bullying behaviour will be taken into account. Incidents of severe bullying will be dealt with in the most appropriate way. Information concerning incidents will be kept by the relevant classroom teacher.

The School Uniform

The School uniform is seen as having a bearing on the overall quality of student welfare.

The School has a uniform because:

- It discourages unhealthy competition between students regarding quality of dress.
- It is economical.
- It is aesthetically pleasing.
- It encourages students to identify with the School community.
- It enables the outside community to gain their first impression of us (and therefore to maintain a certain image in an increasing competitive education market).
- It frees students from peer pressure to conform to dress norms they are happier without (e.g. length of skirt and "brand name" clothing).
- It helps to establish a tone both in discipline and attitude to study.

Revised

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