

Laerskool S E D A V E N Primary



Disciplinary Policy

(Revised: 2012)

DISCIPLINE WITH DIGNITY

OUR MISSION

- TO INTRODUCE LEARNERS TO JESUS
- TO NURTURE LOVE FOR GOD AND FELLOW MAN
- TO TEACH LEARNERS TO THINK AND TO DO
- TO INSPIRE AND EMPOWER TO SERVE GOD AND MANKIND

OUR VISION

- TO BE A BEACON OF LIGHT

OUR MOTTO

- NON SIBI SED DEO (NOT FOR SELF, BUT FOR GOD)

The above mission is comprehensive in its scope and implies a team effort involving *inter alia* instruction, example, intervention and correction (discipline). The following policy focuses on *the discipline component* of the mission and can be encapsulated in the phrase:

Discipline with Dignity

This implies dignity for the teacher as well as for the learner.

1. PRIVILEGES

The following basic privileges/rights form the corner stones of the School's disciplinary code:

1.1 The privilege to live work and learn in a stable SDA-environment without being adversely influenced or disturbed by others.

This protects the legitimate privilege of teachers to teach and learners to learn without disruption by others. It also allows legitimate action to be taken against those who wilfully disrupt the learning process or influence others negatively with regard to the SDA-lifestyle and values.

1.2 The privilege to live work and learn in a clean, safe and orderly environment

This allows the school authorities to take action against litterbugs, graffiti artists, vandals, untidiness in schoolbooks and personal appearance, and those who threaten the safety of others or the good order of the school.

1.3 The privilege to be treated courteously and respectfully

Every learner, no matter how young or disruptive, should be granted this privilege, and every teacher can **expect** courtesy and respect. This privilege includes the privilege of freedom of expression. Freedom of expression should, however, never degenerate into subordination, insult or disruptive behaviour.

1.4 The privilege of *due process*

Due Process implies that in any disciplinary situation the "accused" will be guaranteed a fair hearing. The five elements of due process are:

- Establish that the accused **is the offender**.
- Tell the accused precisely what the offence is.
- Give the accused full opportunity to state **his/her side of the matter**. Consider this input seriously.
- Investigate the offence **objectively**, i.e. free of any prejudice.
- Take care to establish the **motive** of the offence.

1.5 The privilege to review and appeal

2 PUNISHMENT

2.1 Elements of Effective and Appropriate Punishment

- It contains an element of **retribution**
- It serves as a **deterrent** to the **offender**
- It serves as a **deterrent** to **others**
- It helps to **protect** society
- It contains an element of **redemption**

2.2 Guidelines for Punishment

Punishment must always be seen as a **part** of the disciplinary action and never as an end in itself. Some suggested guidelines that should be applied to **all** punishment meted out to learners are:

- **Punishment must be fair**
This means that the punishment must generally be regarded as fair not only by the offender, but also by the school and parent community, and the offended.
- **Punishment must be reasonable**

"Write out 100 times 'I must remember to bring my book to school' or "Write out the chapter which you failed to learn for your test 10 times", or "Write a two page four-colour essay on 'The inside of a Balloon'" are punishments that are obviously unfair, and should not find a place at Sedaven.

- **Punishment must be appropriate**

This implies not only appropriate to the offence but also to the individual child and the circumstances of the incident.

- **Punishment must be relatively immediate**

A long delay between the offence and the punishment is not desirable, yet enough time must be allowed to ensure that due process is followed and that decisions are not made in the heat of the moment when emotions are running high.

- **Punishment must be generally in line with precedent**

Few things cause more discontent among learners than inconsistent punishment. Circumstances **do** alter cases, but generally similar offences should carry similar punishments.

2.3 PUNISH WITH DIGNITY

- **Corporal punishment is not allowed**

- Never shout at learners. When a teacher loses his temper, he should rather lower the tone of his voice!
- Never berate a learner severely in the presence of the whole class or other learners. Rather set up an appointment with him/her and discuss the problem privately after class or after school.
- Do not punish the whole class when only one or two learners are involved.
- Punishment should not interfere with a learner's opportunity to perform well in school. E.g. it is not a good idea to confiscate school workbooks or textbooks permanently. (Educators are sometimes tempted to do this when they catch a learner working on another subject in his or her class).
- Do not detain learners when they have another appointment elsewhere, unless prior arrangements were made with the other staff involved.
- **Hard labour (community service) as a form of punishment:**
 - When hard labour is given, the teacher should supervise this himself.
 - As a general rule hard labour should be perceived to benefit the school rather than the teacher himself. Avoid tasks like washing your car or cleaning your house.
 - Where possible, hard labour should be related to the type of offence e.g. sweeping of the passages when there was a wilful messing on the floor.
- **The principal as "punishment officer" (Strafbeampte):**
 - Punishment by the principal for an offence committed while the learner is or was under the jurisdiction of a teacher is not an ideal situation and should be considered a **last resort**.
 - Because the ultimate authority for the discipline at the school rests with the principal, he may be called upon to help a teacher with maintaining of discipline.
 - The principal will take such requests seriously, and will help in what he considers to be the most appropriate way.

- Teachers should, however, guard against misusing this support service.

The following should be kept in mind:

- Teachers should as far as possible deal with their own disciplinary problems and should not send learners to the principal often, because this undermines their own authority.
 - Never promise a learner punishment on behalf of the principal. He may very well decide **not** to punish a learner, because punishment is not necessarily synonymous with good discipline. The principal may find extenuating circumstances for the learner, or he may decide upon a different type of punishment than that promised on his behalf by the teacher!
 - When learners are sent to the principal, the teacher should, as a general rule accompany him/her and give to the principal a full account of the problem. This will save much time and will prevent gaps in the communication process. A written note is usually a second best option and should be avoided if possible.
- **Abdication of responsibility** The following forms of abdication of responsibility are not acceptable:
 - Do not threaten to stop teaching as a method of punishment. You cannot tell the class that you will not teach them before this or that has happened.
 - A teacher may never tell a learner: "get out my class and never come back. "I refuse to teach you forthwith". This teacher is overstepping his authority and creates a very embarrassing situation, because the principal will definitely order the learner back to class, which may be humiliating to the teacher.
 - **Suggestions for "preventative" discipline in the classroom**
 - Let the learners enter and leave the class in an orderly and quiet manner.
 - Never compete with some talking when teaching, but insist on absolute silence when speaking.
 - Do not waste time. Get busy immediately after the last learner has entered the classroom, and keep the learners' attention or let them work until the last minute. Every minute of the period must be utilised, because, if the learners have "idle" moments, they will get up to mischief, in which case the teacher is usually to be blamed!

2.5 General responsibility for maintaining discipline

- Every staff member should always try to keep disciplinary standards high in the school, not only in the classroom, but also after school hours.
- Teachers must realise that they are always on duty and that they should apply the school rules at all times without waiting for other staff members to act! **Do however respect the territory of other staff members**, especially if they are present.

3 TYPES OF OFFENCES

3.1 Ordinary offences (All violations of school rules are ordinary offences except those that are defined as serious offences)

The following are examples of ordinary offences:

- Homework not done or incomplete
- Assignments not handed in
- Absence from school/classes without permission
- Disruptive behaviour
- Copying of work of other learners
- “Borrowing” of someone else’s possessions without his/her permission. (A second offence will be dealt with as a “serious misconduct” offence.)
- Littering
- Tardiness
- Wearing wrong school uniform or inappropriate dress for the occasion
- Damaging of school property

3.2 Serious offences

The following are examples of serious offences.

- Rape
- Indecent assault
- Sexual harassment with aggravating circumstances
- Assault with the intention to do grievous bodily harm
- Common assault of an educator
- Serious intimidation of staff, teaching and non-teaching
- Malicious damage of school property (Vandalism)
- Theft with aggravating circumstances, including theft of examination papers.
- The possession or sale of stolen items including examination papers.
- Robbery
- Possession of dangerous weapons on school premises, a dangerous weapon being defined as a weapon, which has the capability to inflict grievous bodily harm.
- The possession of obscene material including material depicting sexual intercourse in all its forms.
- Unauthorised visits in the bedrooms of the opposite gender
- Illicit sex.
- Homosexual activities.
- Satanic practices.
- The possession or sale or drinking of intoxicating liquor (or being under the influence) on school premises, or at a school function/excursion not on school premises.
- The possession or sale or use of drugs or other illegal substances (or being under the influence of such substances) on the school premises, or at a school function/excursion not on the school premises. (See 4.2 Procedures for smoking or drug related offences).

- The possession or sale or use of tobacco products while on the school premises or at a school function/excursion not on the school premises (See 4.2 Procedures for smoking or drug related offences).
- Repeated ordinary misconduct offences.

4 MANAGING DISCIPLINE AND PUNISHMENT AT SEDAVEN Primary SCHOOL

The procedures whereby discipline and punishment is managed at Sedaven Primary School are designed to

- To effect rehabilitation and personal commitment from the learner to refrain from misconduct.
- Ensure reasonable consistency in dealing with misconduct and deviant behaviour at school,
- To encourage close cooperation between the parents and the school in the education of the learner,

4.1 The procedure for managing discipline and punishment (Ordinary Offences)

The following procedure is the “normal” procedure for dealing with discipline and punishment. It should, however, be kept in mind that circumstances alter conditions and in exceptional cases the educator/principal may at his/her discretion decide to follow a different procedure.

Step 1

Each educator (within the framework of this policy) deals with minor disciplinary matters (ordinary offences) according to his/her own personality and style.

Step 2

If the learner does not respond positively to the educator’s interventions the educator will submit a disciplinary form together with a verbal report to the Deputy Principal. The Deputy Principal will consider the facts of the case and together with the educator decide on an appropriate course of action. The disciplinary form will be filed in the learner’s personal file.

Step 3

If a second disciplinary form is lodged by the same (or another) educator, the matter will be considered in a serious light and will be referred to the principal. The parent/guardian will definitely be involved in a search for a solution.

Step 4

When a third disciplinary form is lodged with the principal the matter will be considered a **serious offence** and will be dealt with according to the procedure for serious misconduct (see paragraph 4.3, below).

Note:

- Copies of all disciplinary forms will be sent home together with the regular school report.
- The information on disciplinary forms will be recorded on the leadership record form and will be considered when leadership positions/responsibilities are assigned.

4.2 Procedure for dealing with smoking or drug abuse offences

These offences will be dealt with as “serious misconduct offences” but there will be a strong emphasis on rehabilitation before punishment or expulsion is considered. The following guidelines will be kept in mind:

- **Learners being found guilty of smoking**
 - **First offence:** Strong warning. Report of incident on file.
 - **Second offence:** Follow the procedures for serious misconduct. The parents/guardian will be involved in a search for a solution. Definite efforts to rehabilitate will be made. This might include suspension in order to attend a stop smoking programme or other professional intervention.
 - **Third offence:** The disciplinary committee will make a final decision that may include a request for voluntary withdrawal from the school or even expulsion.
- **Learners being found guilty of drug abuse**
 - **First offence:** Follow the procedures for serious misconduct and arrange for professional help (counselling). Report the matter to SANCA.
 - **Second offence:** Suspend learner in order attend a rehabilitation programme. Report the matter to SANCA.
 - **Third offence:** The disciplinary committee will make a final decision that may include a request for voluntary withdrawal from the school or even expulsion.

4.3 Procedure for dealing with serious offences

Note: If a teacher becomes aware of a serious offence he/she should always report this to the principal. **Do not promise the learner that you will keep quiet if he does not break the rule again. This may result in serious embarrassment to the teacher and the school.** In some cases the principal will, together with the teacher, decide not to take the matter further, but then the teacher will have the full backing of the principal in the matter.

- Any learner alleged to have committed a **serious offence**, must be brought to the principal. The principal shall hear the evidence and then decide on the action to be taken.
- In the event that the learner is to be charged with serious misconduct, the principal will inform the learner’s parents in writing of the proposed action and arrange for a fair hearing by a small disciplinary committee. Normally the committee will be made up of
 - The Principal
 - One or two members of senior management team
 - The local church pastor or pastoral counsellor for the learner
 - Any other staff member deemed to have direct interest/involvement in the case.
- The principal must make a written report of the case.
- A copy of the written charge shall be delivered to the learner concerned and his or her parents or guardian by handing it over to him/her personally; and forwarding it in the most expedient manner (registered letter, e-mail, fax) to the parent’s or guardian’s last known residential address.

- The charge shall contain a direction calling upon the learner to deliver within a period of three school days a written admission or denial of the charge, and if he or she so desires, a written explanation regarding the serious misconduct with which he or she is charged.
- If the learner admits the charge, either in writing or orally in person before the principal, he or she shall be deemed guilty of serious misconduct as charged. However if the principal is of the opinion that the misconduct may warrant expulsion from the school, a fair hearing will still be conducted notwithstanding the admission of guilt.
- Before the hearing the learner and his/her parent/guardian must be informed and understand the charge, with five days notice, indicating the time, place and date.
- At the hearing, the principal shall be the presiding officer who –
 - In the case where a learner admits his or her guilt on a charge of serious misconduct, makes a recommendation on the correctional measures to be imposed.
 - In the case where the learner denies his or her guilt on a charge of serious misconduct, hears the charge in the manner set out below, and upon a finding of guilty, makes a recommendation on the correctional measures to be imposed.
- The hearing shall be conducted as expeditiously and as informally as possible, but with due regard to the principles of fairness, reasonableness and due process which safeguard the interest of the learner and any other party involved in the hearing.
- At the hearing the prosecuting officer may:
 - Present facts by way of adducing oral or written statements or documentary evidence
 - Question any witnesses.
 - Advance arguments in support of the charge.
- At the hearing the learner shall have the right to be personally present and to be represented by his or her parents or guardian or a person nominated by the learner or his/her parents or guardian who shall have the right to
 - Be heard by impartial persons
 - Treated with dignity during the process
 - To present facts from the learner by adducing his or her statement, either in writing or orally.
 - To adduce other statements either in writing or orally or documentary evidence in defence of the learner.
 - To question any witness called in support of the charge;
 - To have access to documentary evidence produced in support of the charge.
 - Be informed in writing of the decision if it is suspension or expulsion
 - Be informed about the right to appeal to the School Board.
- A learner may at any time during the hearing admit his or her guilt on the charge, whereupon he or she shall be deemed to be guilty of serious misconduct as charged
- After the conclusion of the hearing the presiding officer shall make a finding on the charge, referring in the case of the finding of guilty to any aggravating and mitigating circumstances he or she may find and make a recommendation on the correctional measure to be imposed.

- In the event of the learner being found guilty, the presiding officer may impose the following correctional measure upon the learner found guilty or deemed to be guilty of the charge:
 - Caution or reprimand the learner
 - Direct him/her for detention after school hours for a specified period of time;
 - Suspension of up to one week or for a reasonable period.
 - Impose a monetary fine not exceeding R500 which shall accrue to the school fund when paid
 - Impose any other correctional measure, including expulsion from the school, which he or she may deem to be reasonable, fair and appropriate in the circumstances.
- A learner or his or her parents or guardian may appeal against the finding of the presiding officer and/or the correction measure imposed.
- The disciplinary proceedings shall be conducted in a fair, equitable, open and transparent manner, save and except that the hearing itself shall be closed to all persons other than the parties of officials involved in it.

Note: When it becomes necessary to consider expulsion, the following counsel should be heeded:

He (The teacher) will not expel a student until every effort has been put forth for his reformation. But when it becomes evident that the student is receiving no benefit himself, while his defiance or disregard of authority tends to overthrow the government of the school, and his influence is contaminating others, then his expulsion becomes a necessity... In most cases when removal is unavoidable, the matter need not be made public. By counsel and co-operation with the parents, let the teacher privately arrange for the student's withdrawal. (Education, p 293).

5. CONCLUSION

Discipline with dignity is not easy. It takes a great deal more time and emotional energy than most traditional methods. But it is basic to our School's philosophy as it affords the young adults in our care the respect and dignity granted them as a birthright by their Creator and Redeemer.



Laerskool **SEDAVEN** Primary

**CITIZENSHIP REPORT
(DISCIPLINE // COMMENDATION)**

Name:..... **Date:**.....

Name of educator:.....

I would like to report the following exemplary behaviour // misbehaviour:

Previous misconduct (of a similar or different nature)	How it was dealt with
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	

Principal's action:

Signature:.....Date:.....