

Discipline

1.0 Introduction: Guiding Discipleship for Learning

Discipline is a part of the learning process that leads and nurtures a person to accept a way of life in thought and conduct, i.e., to become a disciple. But discipleship does not exist in a vacuum. Students are called to be pupils in schools doing what the school expects them to be doing.

The discipline of children is a means to assist them to develop Christ-honouring self-control, to recognize acceptable behaviour, to grow in respect for God, authority, each other, and the rest of God's creation. In the development of self-discipline, the child becomes aware and takes corrective action, and is reconciled. Through reconciliation, the child experiences forgiveness and learns to forgive.

The Christian approach to disciplining does not emphasize punishment but rather seeks to guide towards improvement. It involves re-direction--a turning away from inappropriate thoughts and behaviour and a turning towards the appropriate. The focus is on future, acceptable behaviour with self-discipline. Hence teachers aim to leave the child's dignity intact before authority, others, and a loving God.

However, exemplary student behaviour is also important in assuring the school's supporting community that Christian norms are in fact practised. Student behaviour is a key factor in promoting the reputation of the school to the broader community. And the ethos of the school is a critical factor in determining to what extent significant learning takes place.

One of the moral questions facing Christians is whether discipline, in its corrective definition, meets with the demands of the Gospel. Many wrongly believe that the New Testament message of compassion means that we must forgive wrongdoing/sin rather than punish it. However, consequences and punishment play a significant role in the disciplining process.

We care a great deal about education in schools, hence we commit ourselves to making the school a safe, wholesome place where significant learning takes place for all students. This guideline recommends the practical, effective means for creating such an environment. These measures have stood the test of time and are solidly based on Scriptural principles.

Authority, direct and indirect, finds its source in God. The staff sees this authority not as a power-relationship, but as a service relationship. It is a tool with which the staff tries and seeks to do what is good and right for the students. The staff is given a task and the right to carry out that task in a way that seeks the welfare of the persons who are "under authority": the child/ren.

Part of this authority is the authority of discipline. Parents are **uniquely** responsible for nurturing (instructing and correcting) their child/ren in the Lord, and are the ones who are primarily accountable to God for the type of nurture provided for their child/ren. Nurture and discipline go together. Discipline can be seen as "the other side of the coin" of nurture. The moral training, instruction, correction and chastisement that we call discipline, must come from the Lord. We cannot substitute our own norms, but we must always look to the standards as they

are given in God's Word.

When establishing discipline and in administering punishment, we must at all times remember that disobedience/misbehaviour is a result of sin. The child should know that in spite of his/her sinful human nature, he/she is accountable for his/her actions. He/she is expected by God to conduct him/herself in a particular manner. Punishment is needed to help a student recognize sin, to get back to being a real student, exercising his office, rather than rebelling against it.

When discipline has been established, order will follow. Order may be defined as that state within the school community that is conducive to learning and teaching, and to a high level of mutual consideration, safety and respect both among the students, and between the teachers and students. Such an order is not intended to restrict students in their development, but, rather, when it is achieved, more openness, mobility, and freedom will exist.

2.0 Component Responsibilities of the Policy

- 2.1 It shall be the policy of **Jarvis District Christian School** to support and encourage the staff, students and parents in developing a school environment which is conducive to effective learning and to attitudes of mutual respect and trust.
- 2.2 The **Jarvis District Christian School Board** has the final responsibility for the effective application of policy for student conduct and discipline. Such a policy should recognize the responsibilities and the rights of students, parents and teachers. The Board will support principals and staff in the implementation and application of these policies.
- 2.3 **Principals** have the responsibility for maintaining an orderly atmosphere which is conducive to learning. Policies in keeping with Ministry and Board regulations are to be developed and made known to all teaching and nonteaching personnel, students and parents. Such policies must emphasize consistency and fairness and be supported by school staff.
- 2.4 The **principal** shall see to it that all areas of the school property are properly supervised in order to discharge the board's moral and legal obligations.
- 2.5 The **staff** shall see to it that Christian behaviour is encouraged at all times and that unacceptable behaviour is clearly discouraged at all times and places as assigned by the principal.
- 2.6 **Teachers** have the task of promoting school rules/expectations for the pupils and the reasons for them, emphasizing the underlying Christian calling of loving God and each other. They provide counsel to students to assist them in adhering to these rules and expectations. The teacher who consistently is aggressive, loud, and authoritarian is as much a liability to building positive student conduct as the teacher who consistently is non-assertive, weak and lacking in control.

However, without eliminating personal discretion and judgement on the part of the teacher, all teachers should be aware of their moral and legal obligation to enforce the Board's policies and to do so in a manner that is **consistent** among the entire staff at all times.

- 2.7 It is the **students'** duty to know the standards of expected behaviour at school and to seek to grow in their maturity of response. The students must submit to the authority of school personnel in matters pertaining to the school's code of behaviour.
- 2.8 **Students** should encourage each other to follow the Code of Conduct.
- 2.9 **Parents** as partners in the education of their children, have the responsibility to be aware and understand the rules governing student behaviour in the school. It is expected that they will assist the school staff by helping their children understand and support the rules.

3.0 **Code of Behaviour**

Note: a copy of the full policy is available at the school should you wish to have a copy