



Discipline Policy

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VERSION HISTORY				
VERSION	APPROVED BY	REVISION DATE	DESCRIPTION OF CHANGE	AUTHOR
1	Head of College	2013	Policy and procedure implementation	Head of College
2	Head of College	2017	Policy and procedure review	Head of College
3	Head of College	2020	Policy and procedure review	Deputy Head of College

*Next review of policy to take place in December 2023 by Deputy Head of College

Discipline Policy

About this policy

St Mary & St Mina's Coptic Orthodox College's Discipline Policy outlines how discipline is **implemented** within the college. It informs **students, parents/caregivers** and **staff** about the **aims**, underlying **philosophy, expectations, strategies** and **responsibilities** for student discipline.

1. Statement of purpose

St Mary & St Mina's Coptic Orthodox College (the college) is committed to providing a safe, fair and honest environment. The college is dedicated to maintaining a firm, but fair approach towards discipline, dealing with matters quickly and effectively, to ensure that a positive and productive learning environment is maintained for all students.

The Discipline Policy was written in the spirit of the college's Christian Orthodox values of love, respect and justice. The Bible verse which best encapsulates the intention of this policy is found within Proverbs 10:17, "He who keeps instruction *is in* the way of life, but he who refuses correction goes astray".

The Discipline Policy sets the framework through which the college manages student discipline and has been formulated to provide support for staff, students and parents/caregivers within the college. The policy fosters engagement in learning, sets clear limits, recognises and rewards positive behaviour, while applying consequences for inappropriate conduct. This is achieved by outlining a system of relationships, rules and recognitions, designed to develop self-discipline within students.

Wellbeing initiatives and disciplinary procedures play an important role in guiding students as they transition from a young age through to adolescence, in the hope that modelling 'Christ like' behaviour, will in turn foster a conducive and supportive learning environment for all students at the college.

2. Values and core rules

The college is committed to providing a safe, supportive and responsive learning environment for everyone. Students at the college are expected to uphold Christian Orthodox values, modelling their behaviour on the example demonstrated in the Bible by Christ himself.

In developing the policy, the college expects students to adhere to the following core rules:

- always uphold the Christian Orthodox beliefs and values of the college;
- respect all members of the college community and show courtesy to all students, teachers and community members;
- follow college and class rules, including the directions of their teachers;
- strive for the highest standards in learning;
- resolve conflict respectfully, calmly and fairly;
- comply with the college's uniform and dress code;
- attend the college every day (unless legally excused);

- respect all property;
- never be violent or bring weapons, illegal drugs, alcohol or tobacco into our schools; and
- never bully, harass, intimidate or discriminate against anyone in our schools

The college will take strong action in response to behaviour that is deemed to be detrimental to self, others, the achievement of high quality teaching and learning or actions that violate the Christian Orthodox ethos of the college.

3. Strategies to promote positive behaviour

The college seeks to develop a culture of positive discipline by setting clear expectations for students and promoting positive behaviour. Strategies for encouraging this culture include:

- setting clear behaviour expectations;
- integration within specific learning, wellbeing and pastoral care programs;
- acknowledging positive behaviour in a range of ways including;
 - verbal praise
 - merits (see section titled 'Discipline plan (merit/demerit system)
 - merit certificates and House Patron awards
 - academic awards
 - acknowledgement in assemblies and college newsletter
 - awarding positions of responsibility and leadership
 - Principal awards – presented at annual Speech Day event

The recording and maintenance of student behaviour is contained within the learning management system 'CENTRAL'. All records are reviewed by the respective classroom teacher within the primary school and House Patron within the senior school. This is to ensure that there is consistency when monitoring and tracking the progress of student behaviour across the college.

4. Discipline plan (merit/demerit system)

The college uses a 'merit and demerit' system to track student behaviour. The system uses a scale of 1-8 to monitor student progression. Every student that enters the college starts on level 3 within the system. In order to promote positive behaviour, students are encouraged to receive merits which will enable them to progress along the scale. The aim for every student at the college is to work towards achieving a level 8.

4.1 Merit

A student at the college may earn a merit from a teacher for displaying exemplary behaviour or going above and beyond what may ordinarily be expected.

If a student receives three (3) merits in a week, then the student will receive merit award from their teacher in the primary school or House Advisor in the senior school. When a student receives five (5) merit awards, they are entitled to a St Abanoub award in the primary school and a House Patron's award in the senior school.

Each time a student at the college receives a St Abanoub award or a House Patron's award, they will also progress one (1) positive stage within the merit/demerit system. If a student receives five (5) House Patron's awards, then they are entitled to a Principal's award to acknowledge their achievement of reaching level 8 within the system. The Principal's award is presented during the college's annual speech day ceremony.

4.2 Demerit

A student at the college may receive a demerit for displaying behaviour which is contrary to core rules of the college or for committing a less serious matter. While it is up to the teacher's discretion to determine when a demerit should be issued, it should not be used as a behaviour management tool within the classroom (please see 'correction in class' section).

If a student receives three (3) demerits in the one week, then the student will be placed on an after-school detention. If a student receives three (3) detentions, then they will be placed on a short-suspension. Every time that a student is suspended, they will move in the negative direction along with the merit/demerit system. Should a student be suspended a total of three (3) times then their place in the college may need to be assessed. Additionally, the student may be asked to move on or expelled from the college if their behaviour does not improve.

5. Consequences for unacceptable behaviour

While it is up to the discretion of every teacher at the college to determine the type of punishment a student may receive as part of any disciplinary action, the following is to be used as a guide for the consequences of unacceptable behaviour.

5.1 Correction in class

A teacher at the college may determine that it is appropriate to discipline a student during class time if the student is displaying behaviour which is not conducive to the learning of their peers or defying the instructions of their classroom teacher.

The first course of action taken by the teacher should be to always reiterate their classroom expectations to the student, before taking any course of action. If the student continues to misbehave, the teacher should verbally warn the student. At this point, if the student continues to do the wrong thing, the teacher should isolate the student within the class. Should a student need to be isolated, this should be recorded within the student's profile in 'SENTRAL' as a negative incident. If the student is continuing to misbehave after being isolated, the teacher may send another student to find the Head of Faculty or the Deputy Head of College to remove the student from the classroom. At this point, the student would have their parent/caregiver contacted and may be issued with further consequences as a result of their behaviour.

There are also instances that may require the student to be sent out of class immediately. In this instance, contact with the Head of Faculty or Deputy Head of College should be made instantly to remove the student from the classroom. At no time should the student who is misbehaving be left unsupervised when removed from the classroom.

5.2 Demerit

As previously stated (in Section 4), a demerit should be given to a student that is displaying behaviour which is contrary to core rules of the college or for committing a less serious matter. For more information, please read the merit/demerit section.

5.3 Parent contact

There may be instances where parent/caregiver contact is required. If student's behaviour warrants contact to a parent/caregiver, the teacher must always ensure that they have all the facts of the matter at hand, which may require the student that has misbehaved complete an incident report. A copy of the report should always be signed by the student and uploaded to their profile within 'SENTRAL'.

When contacting a parent/caregiver, it is advised to always have a colleague present that can overhear the conversation. Should contact with a parent/caregiver get 'heated', it is recommended that you try and end the conversation as quickly as possible, if the matter cannot be diffused.

Any contact with a parent/caregiver must be recorded within the student's profile in SENTRAL. Under no circumstances is a member of the college staff to tolerate any threats or abuse from a parent/caregiver. If this is the case, the incident should be reported immediately to the Deputy Head of College and the teacher should provide an incident report outlining the contents of the communication.

5.4 Lunch detention

A student at the college may receive a lunch detention from a teacher for an incident that may not warrant a demerit or parent/caregiver contact. If this is the case, the student must remain under the supervision of a teacher at all times for the duration of the detention, with the incident, along with the detention, recorded within the student's profile in SENTRAL.

5.5 After school detention

A student may be issued an after school detention upon receiving three (3) demerits within the same week. Additionally, an after school detention may be issued as a consequence to a student for an incident that warrants more than a demerit, but is less than a suspension. A student that is blatantly disregarding the college's expectations around uniform or chewing gum for example, may be issued with an after school detention. The detention should be recorded in SENTRAL and the student only permitted to sit a detention once they have returned the detention slip which has been acknowledged and signed by their parent/caregiver.

After school detentions will take place on Friday afternoon for students from Year 7-12 from 3:15pm-4:15pm. Should a student fail to attend a detention, they will receive a second detention, which they must also sit for failing to turn-up to the original detention.

5.6 Suspension

Suspension will occur as a consequence of a serious breach of College rules, or serious disobedience.

Where any staff member considers that an act or the behaviour of a student may warrant serious consequences beyond detention, the staff member must refer the matter via writing or email to the appropriate senior member of staff. Dependent on the matter, the appropriate staff member will be: House Patron (Welfare), Head of Faculty (Curriculum) or the Deputy Head of College.

Once the incident has been investigated, all reports will be forwarded to the Head of College who can make a reasonable and unbiased decision, using the principles of procedural fairness.

Where the level of misbehaviour is in breach of the College's Code of Conduct, individual behaviour management plans must be made.

If a student is suspended, work must be organised for the student by requesting the students' teachers to complete the 'Work for Student on Leave' google drive folder.

Plans will be made by the College Welfare Team and negotiated between the College, students and parents/caregiver, taking into consideration the students:

- age;
- developmental needs; and
- behavioural context.

The College Welfare Team will refer the student to other support available that may include the House Patrons, College Counsellor and the College Chaplain.

Upon returning to the college, the student will be placed on a behaviour monitoring card, where the desired behaviour/goals for the student will be clearly described. The plan will outline the changes required to the learning environment to support the student to modify their behaviour.

5.7 Behaviour monitoring card

A behaviour monitoring card may be issued to a student that has demonstrated similar misconduct within a number of teachers classes or upon returning to the college from a suspension.

The behaviour monitoring card sets out the desired behaviour/goals for the student and outlines the changes required to the learning environment to support the student to modify their behaviour.

The length of time that the student will be placed on a behaviour monitoring card is to be determined by either the Deputy Head of College or House Patron. At the end of the everyday, the student is to write a reflection based on their days performance and return the behaviour monitoring card to their House Advisor signed by their parent/caregiver.

5.8 Expulsion

A student is to be expelled from the college for incidents which the college regards as the most serious of matters. Examples of this includes:

- reckless or intentional behavior that causes injury to other students or staff members;
- repeat actions that could have caused injury to students or staff;
- bullying, harassment or vilification of students or staff;
- serious breaches of College procedures relating to the inappropriate use of technology including but not limited to cyber bullying, accessing of inappropriate material of a sexual nature while in school and/or distributing material to other students, taking inappropriate photographs of other students or staff and or the distribution of the photographs;
- theft of student or staff property;
- leaving the college grounds without permission;
- vilification of other students; and/or
- criminal acts or the possession of illicit materials such as drugs or weapons.

Exclusion is the act of preventing a student's admission to a number of schools. St Mary and St Mina's Coptic Orthodox College believe that all children deserve a second chance and that a new educational environment may be helpful for the child. As such, the college does not condone the exclusion of any student.

The College prohibits the use of **corporal punishment** in disciplining students attending the College and does not explicitly or implicitly sanction the administering of **corporal punishment** by non-school persons, including parents, to enforce discipline at the College. Any allegations of staff involved in corporal punishment will be investigated in line with the colleges Child Protection and Grievance and Complaints policy. www.stmary.nsw.edu.au

All illegal actions including the use of a weapon, sexual assault and inappropriate content being placed or sent via technology or the use of corporal punishment either inside or outside of the college will be reported to the NSW Police Force's local Student Liaison Officer, Sgt Rod SILVA
email: silv1rod@police.nsw.gov.au for further action/advice.

6. Investigating disciplinary matters

Prior to issuing a student with disciplinary action pertaining to breaches of college rules that are of the most serious in nature, the following general procedures must be adhered to for dealing with these allegations.

Once a matter has been identified by a student or a member of staff, an incident report must be completed immediately, which contains as much detail as possible about the alleged incident. The incident report must then be forwarded to the Deputy Head of College who will commence an investigation of the matter.

6.1 Investigation

The Deputy Head of College will arrange a meeting in a timely manner with the individual/s reporting the incident to discuss the details of the report and gather all the facts.

Depending on the severity of the matter and whether students pose a threat or harm to others, the Deputy Head of College may choose to temporarily isolate the alleged offender, who must remain supervised at all times, until the Deputy Head of College interviews the alleged student.

6.2 Interviewing process

In keeping to the principles of procedural fairness, the alleged student must be provided with the opportunity to respond to the claims which have been made against them. The alleged student will need to:

- complete an incident report;
- advised of the procedures which will be followed during the investigation;
- be informed of who will be making the decision if disciplinary action is required (the Head of College – or their delegate); and
- how they can appeal any decision that is made.

Once the alleged student provides their statement and is interviewed by the Deputy Head of College, the Deputy Head of College is to determine whether additional witnesses need to be interviewed. If additional witness statements are required, the Deputy Head of College must first ascertain whether they actually did witness the event by asking: did you witness an incident involving (alleged student/s) at (date/time)? If the answer is YES, the witness will be asked to complete an incident report and then interviewed by the Deputy Head of College regarding their statement.

6.3 Decision

Once the Deputy Head of College has gathered all the evidence that is necessary to make a determination on the matter, they are to prepare a report which is forwarded on to the Head of College. Based on the information contained in the report, the Head of College is to make an informed and unbiased decision which is passed on to the Deputy Head of College.

In the event that the decision is to suspend or expel the student, the Deputy Head of College must inform the alleged student of the outcome and contact the student's parent/caregiver immediately (student to remain present in the room if appropriate) to request an immediate meeting. During the meeting, the Deputy Head of College will inform the parent/caregiver of the incident, the investigation that took place and the determination of the consequence regarding the alleged event. The parent/caregiver will be advised of the review process and their right to raise an appeal. At the conclusion of the meeting, the parent/caregiver will be presented with a letter of suspension/expulsion, which will then be placed on the student's profile in SENTRAL.

In the event that a parent/caregiver cannot attend a meeting immediately, then the student will not be permitted to attend the college until a meeting has taken place between the Deputy Head of College and the parent/caregiver.

In the case that parent/caregiver cannot be contacted, the student will be informed that they are to attend the college, but will be placed on an in-school suspension until contact with the parent/caregiver is made. All attempts to contact with parent/caregiver must be recorded on the student's profile within SENTRAL.

6.4 Appeal and review process

In the event that a parent/caregiver or student would like to appeal a decision, they must refer to the college's Grievance Policy which is published on the college's website.

The steps to appeal and review a decision are explained more explicitly within the college's Grievance Policy, however, it is important to remember that the review is to be conducted by a senior member of staff. Additionally, the person reviewing the complaint must not be the subject of the complaint in any way or have been involved in making a decision on the matter.