

DISCIPLINE

Hillcrest Christian College is dedicated to maintaining discipline, which is firm, consistent, fair and tempered with love. The staff are involved in training young people to attain good Christian character, with an emphasis on the positive aspects of student conduct. Staff maintain standards of behaviour in the classroom through consistency, professionalism and a genuine regard for the student. However, when discipline becomes necessary, it is firmly carried out, tempered by good judgment and understanding.

Moral violations, such as disobedience, disrespect, lying, fighting, cheating and swearing will be dealt with firmly and consistently. Depending on the individual offence, the range of consequences will be in keeping with the College's Behaviour Management Handbook. Extreme problems, which may involve violations of civil law, may involve social agencies, law enforcement and/or pastoral conferencing.

STRUCTURE

There are several 'levels' or 'steps' for effective behaviour management. These levels reflect aspects such as the seriousness of the offence and repetitive behaviour. The levels will generally be used in order of increasing intervention and in line with Biblical principles of forgiveness, love, compassion and justice.

1. Encouraging Positive Behaviours

It is important for students to experience success in various aspects of school life. Staff at Hillcrest Christian College provide a range of opportunities for each student including academic development, music programs, sport (including inter-house and inter-school competitions), community work, outreach programs, cultural activities, school community service groups, public speaking and debating. Participation in these programs aims to build the students' sense of worth and thus decrease the desire to choose negative behaviours. Students will be praised and commended for behavior which demonstrates the Christian spirit of the College.

Much value can be gained by using the following practices:

- open communication between parents and teachers regarding positive behaviours and successes
- public recognition through assemblies and newsletters, including 'Student of the Week' awards.
- a broad range of activities for students to choose
- encouraging wide friendship groups
- promotion of the school rules

2. Discouraging Negative Behaviours

Negative behaviours must be discouraged. Students will occasionally fall short of standards expected. When this occurs it is important that the student concerned, and usually others, have expectations reinforced through explanation. Individuals or groups will be reminded of appropriate behaviour by referring to class behaviour plans, the Student Diary and input at assemblies and chapel services.

3. Consequences

Both positive and negative behaviours have consequences. Students need to be helped to make informed choices about behaviour. Consequences will, wherever possible, be logical and relevant to the rules broken. Immediate consequences such as a Lunchtime Detention or After Hours Detention (between 3:30pm and 5:00pm) provide the best opportunity for appropriate lessons to be learned.

DISCIPLINE *(continued)*

Parents will be notified in advance if a student is to be detained after hours and consequently is not able to travel home on the College bus. In this case it will be the parent's responsibility to collect the student from the College, after arrangements have been made with the relevant Year Level Coordinator.

Any action by a student that causes financial loss to the College or to another student must be reimbursed by the family. The consequences for breaches of discipline will include one or more of the following:

- Conduct Card: 1 – 2 weeks (*see below*)
- Note in diary (diary to be signed by parent) or letter home to parents
- Daily litter patrol
- Detention (s) – Lunchtime or Afterschool
- Interview with parent / students / Year Level Coordinator
- Internal or external suspension
- Written apology to the victim and the College
- Referral to counseling
- Referral to a social welfare agency
- Referral to a behavior change program
- Police involvement
- Expulsion if severe behavior continues unabated and/or if the nature of the incident warrants this level of response.

Note: This is not a step process and consequences for serious misconduct are determined by the relevant staff member, Coordinator or Head of School, in consultation with the Head of College.

CONDUCT CARD SYSTEM

For students with serious or on-going concerns regarding attitude, behavior and actions, the College has a progressive Conduct Card system whereby students are held accountable and directed towards more positive outcomes. The main conduct card, a White Card, is issued by the relevant Year Level Coordinator and the higher level Red Card by the Head of School. If a student is able to satisfactorily modify their behavior the process allows them to resume their normal schooling.

In a minority of circumstances, if these measures are unsuccessful, the Head of School recommends to the Head of College that a student's enrolment be terminated. A formal meeting with the student and parents is then held to determine the outcome of this recommendation.

PARENT PARTNERSHIP AND COMMUNICATION

We give high priority to clear communication within the school and to a positive partnership with parents since these are crucial in promoting and maintaining high standards of behaviour. Where the behaviour of a child is giving cause for concern, it is important that all those working with the child in school are aware of those concerns and of the steps which are being taken in response. The key professional in this process of communication is the class teacher or pastoral teacher who has the initial responsibility for the child's welfare.

DISCIPLINE *(continued)*

Early warning of concerns should be communicated to the Year Level Coordinator so that strategies can be discussed and agreed before more formal steps are required. The College will communicate policy and expectations to parents. Where behaviour is causing concern, parents will be informed at an early stage and given an opportunity to discuss the situation. Parental support will be sought in devising a plan of action within this policy and further disciplinary action will be discussed with the parents.

The frequent low level positive and negative behaviours make it impossible for teachers to communicate every instance with parents. However, it is expected that teachers will communicate with parents as much as possible, via the student diary, or by appropriate letter, phone call or email, to keep parents informed of steps taken, to seek their support and give encouragement. Teachers are expected to communicate clearly and consistently with students. At all times teachers are to promote open channels of communication.

FORGIVENESS AND RESTORATION

The ultimate aim of intervention strategies is to rebuild relationships. Behaviour management practices should reflect the nature of God, who offers forgiveness to all and gives forgiveness to those with a repentant heart (*1 John 1:9*).

Students need to be offered forgiveness and led to a place of being sorry for the negative behaviour chosen. Apologies to people affected by their negative behaviour needs to be sought. Staff are encouraged to pray with the students at such a time so that a closer walk with God may be developed.

GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES

On occasions, issues of grievance, concern and/or conflict may arise in any College community. A clear process needs to be followed to deal with these problems when they arise so that normal relationships can be quickly restored. Grievances between students, teachers and parents are best sorted out in the way espoused by Jesus in Matthew's Gospel, Chapter 18, where we are urged to sort out our problems by going straight to the one with whom we have an issue.

If a parent feels that something has occurred in a class room then the teacher needs to be approached. If there is an issue between parents, then they need to speak directly to the other parent. Often issues that escalate occur due to a poor understanding of the whole situation or a failure to find out all the information. Most disagreements, miscommunications and differences of opinion can be resolved at this level before asking others to join the discussion. If the issue cannot be resolved within the classroom or playground situation and the individual still has concerns, then the matter should be directed to Year Level Coordinators and Heads of School.

If the individual is still unhappy with the outcome or has not met with a reasonable resolution through the first two steps of the referral process, an appointment can be made with the Head of College. An appointment should be made only after step one and two have been followed. Individuals would need to have very serious grounds to seek this avenue, which should not be taken unless all other avenues are exhausted and the issue warrants such action. Only extreme grievance cases may be directed to the Executive Principal directly. The Executive Principal's decision on the matter is final.

The Chaplaincy team is often called in for wise counsel at times as well. Our basic goal in all situations is to bring resolution and clarity to conflict situations so that we can continue to work together to promote the good of the students and to foster the vision, mission and philosophy of the College.