

Policy

Statement

SCHOOL DISCIPLINE

RATIONALE

The Department for Education and Children's Services (DECS) is accountable to the community, through the Minister for Education and Children's Services, for managing student behaviour and for creating safe, orderly, productive and successful learning communities. This policy is based on the following shared principles:

- DECS operates within the context of the wider society and has a responsibility to prepare young people for successful participation in society.
- All individuals and groups within society should be treated with respect at all times.
- Individuals choose their own behaviour to meet their needs, although some circumstances may limit the ability to make the best choices.
- Families, society, peers, staff and other significant adults influence the behavioural development of young people.
- Behaviour has consequences which increase or reduce immediate and future choices.
- Individuals must accept responsibility for their own behaviour according to their developmental ability.

In a democratic society, the teaching of appropriate citizenship skills needs to involve all members of that community. Schools provide a social context in which students need to be supported while being taught how to accept responsibility for their own behaviour. DECS, school communities, services and agencies will work together to create learning communities which are:

- safe
- inclusive
- conducive to learning
- free from harassment and bullying.

The School Discipline Policy provides a framework for the development of such learning communities. Whilst the policy applies to all schools, a range of specific strategies will need to be developed to meet the varying needs of students in school settings and the varying needs and expectations of local communities (families, students, staff, wider community and service providers). Each school's behaviour code will describe these strategies.

POLICY STATEMENTS

1. Schools will focus on providing opportunities and support for students to experience success. In order to ensure student success:
 - schools will ensure that definitions of success recognise the achievements of all students, that curriculum is inclusive, and that all students are able to participate in curriculum which is valued
 - DECS curriculum documents will provide the framework for the learning of all

- students
- assessment and reporting procedures will focus on student progress and achievement within the curriculum frameworks
 - schools will implement strategies to ensure positive learning opportunities for all students
 - responses to inappropriate behaviour will involve staff, students and families in partnerships which focus on student strengths and provide support for students in crisis while reinforcing the rights of other students to learn and teachers to teach in safety and without disruption
 - staff, students and families will work in partnerships to acknowledge student behaviour which meets the expectations of the school community, as described in its behaviour code.
2. Schools will develop in students an acceptance of responsibility for their own behaviour. In order to develop this responsibility:
- students need to understand that behaviour is a action made by an individual within a social context
 - a school community will place appropriate limits on students' behaviour choices
 - students will be taught the skills to enable them to actively participate in the development, implementation and review of their school's behaviour codes, and will be involved in decision-making processes within the school
 - the school behaviour code will reflect processes for restorative and reconciliatory actions
 - students' responsibility for their own behaviour will be reinforced consistently in a manner which enhances their understanding of responsible social behaviour
 - social responsibilities will be taught across the curriculum and modelled in all aspects of school life
 - schools will model and teach values of honesty, trust, respect and cooperation
 - students will have access to services and agencies which can support them in developing responsibility for their own behaviour.
3. Staff, parents or caregivers, and students will work together to create safe, caring, orderly and productive learning communities which support the rights of all students to learn and all teachers to teach. In order to support and protect the rights of all members of the school community:
- school staff will manage aspects of the school environment, including sexual and racial harassment and bullying, so that students learn to respect rights and fulfil responsibilities
 - schools will develop consequences for both responsible and irresponsible behaviours, and will consistently apply these consequences
 - system level procedures such as suspension and exclusion will be used to support a change in the behaviour of students who do not respond to school level consequences of irresponsible behaviour
 - the procedures outlined in DECS's "Procedures for suspension, exclusion and expulsion of students from attendance at school" (1996) will be followed when a system level response is required
 - when appropriate, DECS and interagency services will support students with

- social, emotional and behavioural difficulties, and the staff who interact with these students
- rights, responsibilities and consequences will be established through negotiation between school staff, students and their families.
4. Each school will develop a behaviour code in partnership with its community and will manage student behaviour in a partnership between students, their families and school staff. Schools are part of the communities in which they operate, and have a responsibility to work collaboratively at a local level. In order to develop collaborative partnerships:
- schools will develop decision-making policies which encourage inclusive participation of the school community
 - schools will consult their communities and give them the opportunity to be involved in developing the behaviour code and to be involved in implementing and reviewing it
 - students, families, school staff and services will work together to negotiate student development plans to support student learning and behaviour change and manage seriously or persistently irresponsible behaviour.

Behaviour codes and student development plans are essential elements of effective partnerships. A behaviour code is a statement of a school community's values and its expectations relating to student behaviour and the school's management of student behaviour. It:

- expands the School Discipline Policy into specific expectations and consequences which accommodate local circumstances
- involves staff, students and their families in decisions about how student behaviour will be managed
- states expectations in terms of individual rights and social responsibilities, as well as the consequences of both responsible and irresponsible behaviours
- describes grievance procedures available to any member of the school community who believes behaviour codes are not being supported or enforced appropriately
- is developed, implemented and reviewed as part of the school planning processes
- is negotiated with and supported by the governing council
- acknowledges other relevant policies and legal obligations.

Schools may ensure that parents and students understand the school's expectations through:

- holding ongoing discussion with the school community to clarify values and expectations
- conducting ongoing consultation with parents and students on the school's behaviour code
- regularly communicating information about the school's behaviour code
- asking each parent and student to sign an acknowledgment of the school's behaviour code as part of enrolment procedures.

A student development plan is negotiated between school staff, a student and the student's family to address student behaviour and learning goals. This may also be part

of a required individual learning plan such as an Individual Education Plan or Negotiated Education Plan. It:

- clearly describes a student's behaviour and learning goals and a process for monitoring progress towards these goals
- is negotiated/reviewed as part of suspension and exclusion procedures
- involves a commitment by the student to change
- involves a commitment by parents and caregivers to support the student and the school in the change process
- is a review or extension of a Negotiated Education Plan for a student with disabilities or an Individual Education Plan for a student under the Guardianship of the Minister or individual learning plan for Aboriginal students
- involves a commitment by the school to support positive behaviour and learning outcomes through specific strategies
- is flexible and able to incorporate a wide range of strategies which take into account the needs of individual students.

PRINCIPLES AND BELIEFS

A number of principles and beliefs guide the effective management of student behaviour, as outlined below.

- 1 Behaviour is chosen for a purpose. The choice may not always be a conscious choice. Students behave in ways which are meaningful and purposeful, based on their perceptions of the best ways to meet their particular needs in a situation or context. Since behaviour is the result of choice, school communities must equip students to make the best possible choices. Schools must provide opportunities for students to develop decision-making skills which enable them to recognise that behaviour can be a conscious choice and that different choices result in different consequences. Students who know how to meet their needs through responsible decisions are less likely to behave in ways which interfere with learning. Both passive, withdrawing behaviours and overt, disruptive behaviours can interfere with student learning and can be equally irresponsible choices. Some circumstances may limit a student's ability to exercise choice, but do not diminish the student's responsibility.
- 2 Behaviour codes need to be explicit. Consequences for behaviour must be non-violent, and reflect the policies of the Department for Education and Children's Services and the expectations of the wider community. Non-violent consequences are responses which do not involve any form of physical punishment, emotional hurt or verbal harassment.
- 3 All individuals and groups within society must be valued and treated with respect. The diversity within a school community must be acknowledged in school responses to student behaviour. Schools must acknowledge that students have different levels of ability to learn and to cooperate with other people. They need to take into account these when formulating appropriate responses to irresponsible behaviour. Most irresponsible or withdrawn behaviours indicate that students need more learning, practice, support, or counselling. Schools need to explore the possible causes and to implement strategies for behaviour change in order to increase the level of successful learning. Strategies may include reviewing and

- reforming school structures, classroom practice or curriculum and involving DECS and interagency services.
- 4 Individuals are able to accept responsibility for their own behaviour. Definitions of responsibility must stem from a shared community understanding, and responsibilities must be taught explicitly across the curriculum. Schools must recognise that the acceptance of responsibility for behaviour is developmental and is dependent on students having opportunities to discuss and practise appropriate behaviour. Students learn to accept responsibility when they are involved in decisions about behaviour and when staff explicitly teach and model responsible behaviour, and consistently reinforce and always expect individuals and groups to accept responsibility for their behaviour. Schools must acknowledge students' varying levels of ability to understand the relationship between rights and responsibilities. For students with disabilities, appropriate behaviour management strategies need to be developed in the context of negotiated curriculum plans.
 - 5 All behaviour has consequences which affect future opportunities. Responsible behaviour increases the student's range of future opportunities. In order to encourage responsible behaviour, school staff need to devote significantly more time and attention to responsible than to irresponsible behaviour. This will be reflected in curriculum content, delivery and assessment practices, and in communication between a school and its wider community. Irresponsible behaviour can decrease the student's range of future opportunities. Therefore, responses to irresponsible behaviour must offer the student support to learn how to make a more responsible choice in the future. While recognising the developmental needs of individual students, responses must be clearly defined and administered consistently in a way which supports the rights of teachers to teach and the rights of students who want to learn. Consequences need to be non-violent, logical, related to the student's behaviour and negotiated as part of each school's behaviour code.
 - 6 A partnership is necessary between staff, students and their families if a safe, caring, orderly and productive school community is to be created and if responsible student behaviour is to be developed. A whole school community approach to the management of student behaviour will provide a consistent environment in which students can learn to take responsibility for their own behaviour. School communities need to work in partnership to identify shared values regarding student behaviour, to clarify expectations and consequences in the school's behaviour code and to ensure that they are being applied consistently. School staff will need to take the initiative in establishing partnerships.
 - 7 Staff must have opportunities to develop a wide range of skills in managing student behaviour. Staff who understand a range of models and are supported in implementing them are better able to develop successful school discipline and to assist students and their families in making decisions about behaviour.

OBJECTIVES, STRATEGIES AND OUTCOMES

The objective of the School Discipline Policy is to establish safe and positive learning communities which increase student responsibility and student learning. Each school will need to consider the objective and outcomes in relation to its current stage of development and to consider what will therefore be realistic and achievable targets. The

strategies listed below reflect the policy statements outlined in this document.

OBJECTIVE	STRATEGIES	OUTCOMES
A positive learning experience	<p>Develop and maintain success for all students</p> <p>Teach students to take responsibility for their behaviour</p> <p>Develop and implement consistent practices to support the rights of all members of the school community</p> <p>Develop partnerships to manage student behaviour Rights of all members of the school community have been supported</p>	<p>Student learning has improved</p> <p>Relationships at school are based on mutual respect</p> <p>Students have understood their social responsibilities</p> <p>Rights of all members of the school community have been supported</p> <p>School community has recognised and acknowledged appropriate behaviour</p> <p>Appropriate support and services have been provided for students experiencing difficulties</p> <p>Student development plans have been managed in partnership between schools, students, families, services and agencies</p> <p>Community has agreed on values, expectations and consequences</p>

RESPONSIBILITIES

Directors, district directors, principals and school-based staff, including teachers, are accountable to the Chief Executive, Department for Education and Children's Services, for implementing the School Discipline Policy.

Responsibilities of directors

DECS directors will:

- provide and coordinate services for students experiencing behavioural difficulties and their schools

- engage in appropriate interagency agreements in order to streamline the provision of services to support students with social and behavioural problems
- provide examples of curriculum review and reform which address behaviour issues
- provide appropriate professional development opportunities for staff
- provide information to parents on DECS policy.

Responsibilities of district directors

District directors will:

- support principals in ensuring that school planning addresses the implementation of the School Discipline Policy
- support principals in ensuring that each school's behaviour code and other behaviour management procedures address needs specific to its community
- ensure DECS district support services and local interagency services provide appropriate services to school communities
- work with principals and statewide services to ensure that mechanisms are developed at a local level to provide appropriate placements for students requiring temporary alternative placement
- support principals and other school personnel to manage critical incidents relating to student behaviour or the aggressive behaviour of community members, and facilitate mediation with community members when necessary
- address grievances of community members who believe a school's management of student behaviour has been unjust.

Responsibilities of principals

Principals will:

- develop, implement and regularly review, in consultation with the school community and governing council, a school behaviour code which is consistent with the DECS School Discipline Policy
- ensure that student behaviour is managed through procedures supported by a strong theoretical understanding of how student learning and behaviour are best supported
- ensure that new staff, students and their families are aware of the school community's negotiated behaviour code and the decision-making procedures open to them if they wish to influence school practice
- ensure that parents or caregivers:
 - have access to DECS's School Discipline Policy, support materials and related documents
 - are aware of their rights to advocacy and of avenues open to them should they have grievances relating to the school's management of student behaviour
- promote structures at class and school level to:
 - enable students to be involved in the management of their behaviour
 - support and enable parents or caregivers and teachers to form relationships within which student behaviour may be managed positively
 - ensure that the school's response to gender, cultural differences, family circumstances or disabilities does not reduce students' learning opportunities
 - increase students' opportunities to experience intellectual, social and physical success

- teach and model decision making in groups and ensure structures are in place for student voice
 - provide opportunities for staff training and development
- involve district support services and other agencies, when appropriate, to support staff and families in managing student behaviour effectively
- use system level consequences and interagency support programs with students who do not respond to class and school consequences.

Responsibilities of school-based staff

School staff will:

- develop and foster positive relationships with students and families
- communicate and interact effectively with students and engage in cooperative problem solving relationships to address issues faced by the learning community
- participate in developing, implementing and reviewing the school's procedures for managing student behaviour
- critically reflect on practices and develop the knowledge and skills needed to manage behaviour change successfully
- establish, maintain, make explicit and model the school's expectations relating to student behaviour
- respond positively to responsible student behaviour and apply consequences if students interfere with teaching and learning and the safe school environment.

In particular, teachers will:

- structure the teaching program to facilitate learning and encourage students to achieve their personal best
- cater for the developmental, social and emotional needs of individual students and use a range of teaching methods
- provide formal and informal feedback on student learning to students and parents or caregivers, and review teaching programs in the light of student learning outcomes
- develop classroom management strategies which:
 - involve negotiation
 - support the participation of all students
 - value differences in gender and the cultural and linguistic backgrounds of students
 - acknowledge positive learning and social behaviours
 - deal effectively with sexual harassment, racism and bullying
 - take into account the impact of physical and intellectual disability, trauma and disadvantage on the learning process
 - establish and maintain safe and supportive learning environments.

Responsibilities of parents and caregivers

When they enrol a student in a school, parents or caregivers accept responsibility to:

- ensure that the student attends school and that school staff are notified of absences
- keep schools informed of health issues, concerns about behaviour or other matters of relevance

- comply with DECS and school policies including the School Discipline Policy.

Other relevant documents

The School Discipline Policy should be considered in conjunction with the following legislation, DECS policies and action plans:

- Education Act (SA 1972) and Regulations under the Act
- DECS Administrative Instructions and Guidelines
- Equal Opportunity Act (SA, 1984)
- Disability Discrimination Act (Commonwealth, 1992)
- DECS policies:
 - ◇ Child protection (1990)
 - ◇ Antiracism (1990)
 - ◇ Parents and schools (1991)
 - ◇ Students with disabilities (2006)
- DECS Procedures for suspension, exclusion and expulsion of students from attendance at school (1995).
- Local Management and site governance
- Learner Wellbeing Framework B-12
- Protective Practices for Staff in their interaction with students
- Reducing Bullying in Schools
- National Safe Schools Framework
- Mandatory Notification

Further information about some of these laws, policies and plans is contained in the implementation kit which supports this policy.