



MAMRE ANGLICAN SCHOOL

WELFARE POLICY

*"Speaking the Truth in love,
we will in all things grow up in Him
who is the Head, that is Christ."
Ephesians 4:15*

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Introduction

The Welfare Policy of Mamre Anglican School is grounded in the broad aim of bringing all things under the Lordship of Christ. Students are guided in their learning to work out a faithful and obedient response to God and His world. This aim is equally applicable to the learning of concepts and skills, the dynamic relationships that form part of that learning, and activity outside the classroom.

A Welfare Policy chiefly addresses those relationships. **A part of the Welfare Policy is the MAMRE ANGLICAN SCHOOL Anti-Bullying Policy which, while it forms a part of the Welfare Policy, is a separate document, because it is primarily a practical “hands on” text.**

The Welfare Policy is to be read within the context of the National Safe Schools Framework and complements the Principles of a Safe and Supportive School environment.

The School’s core values and ethos also complement the Framework.

Some rules are necessary to help regulate the social situation that is school. These rules are minimal, general and a guide to students. They are also a recognition that there is a foolishness inherent in our human nature, and that students need adult guidance in forming their responses. These rules clarify expectations of students in a positive way, while avoiding the development of phariseeism, which seeks absolution from responsible choice through fulfilment of the letter of the law. Otherwise, we may turn out students who live by the rules but have no idea of either Christian freedom or service.

It has been said that the two questions children ask implicitly by their behaviour are:

- “Am I loved?”
- “Where are the acceptable boundaries of behaviour?”

- So teachers need to ask themselves in areas such as classroom management:-
- “How will the students know they are loved?”
- “How do the structures, policies etc. reflect love for our students?”

As the community works together to affirm individual members, students will develop increasingly responsible use of freedom.

However, students will often violate the conditions for healthy relationships. Discipline is then necessary, with the aim of healing and restoring relationships – whether they be teacher – pupil or pupil – pupil. **There is a zero tolerance for bullying, violating as it does, the inherent relationships that Christ modeled for us.** The reconciling work of the Gospel is an active reality and should result in the acceptance of Godly norms for behaviour.

Where some form of punishment is deemed appropriate, it must be seen as a just result of foolish student choices. It must be the outworking of love and truth, which ultimately builds up the students, does not cause them to stumble and is appropriate to their age.

Discipline should not provoke others through unjust or unfair treatment. Procedural fairness is a basic right when dealing with others. All students at Mamre Anglican School have the ‘right to be heard’, using the following procedure:

1. students will be explained the allegations related to the matter at hand and any other information which will be taken into account regarding the matter
2. students will be explained the process by which the matter will be considered
3. students will be given the opportunity to respond to the allegations and to explain their understanding of the events fully

4. students will be explained the discipline determined to be appropriate regarding the allegations and given opportunity to respond to the discipline determined
5. students will be explained the process involved if they wish to seek a review of the decision made in response to the allegations

All students at Mamre Anglican School have the 'right to an unbiased decision'. This consists of:

1. impartiality in an investigation and in the decision-making process
2. absence of bias by a decision-maker

We therefore:

- endeavour to discipline in accord with God's word
- attempt to ensure all discipline is appropriate to the wrong doing
- try to be fair and consistent to the individual student, keeping the behaviour as the focus and not making judgment on the person
- investigate allegations fully and make decisions based on the information, avoiding all bias, acknowledging the need to be reasonable and objective in the case where the investigator and decision-maker are the same staff member
- make students/parents (where necessary) aware of allegations, processes and decisions as appropriate. This may involve the accessing of services to parents or students such as interpreter services if required.

The process that leads to the imposition of discipline at Mamre Anglican School will be procedurally fair.

The 'hearing rule' includes the right of the person against whom an allegation has been made to:

- *know the allegations related to a specific matter and any other information which will be taken into account in considering the matter;*
- *know the process by which the matter will be considered;*
- *respond to the allegations;*
- *know how to seek a review of the decision made in response to the allegations.*

The 'right to an unbiased decision' includes the right to:

- *impartiality in an investigation and decision making;*
- *an absence of bias by a decision-maker, "and*

The review mechanism adds to the fairness of the process."

Responsibilities and Expectations

All members of the school community have certain rights, responsibilities and expectations. Primarily these involve the right to be heard, to feel safe, to be cared for and to be able to teach/learn. For students specifically, these responsibilities and expectations include:

RESPONSIBILITIES	EXPECTATIONS
I have the responsibility to treat others with understanding, not to laugh at, tease or try to hurt their feelings.	To be happy and treated with understanding.
I have the responsibility to treat others with respect and politeness.	To be treated with respect and be heard and listened to and to politely contribute.
I have the responsibility to respect the authority of teachers and ancillary staff (i.e. all adults).	Those in authority have a loving concern for me.
I have the responsibility to listen to other people's ideas.	I should be able to politely disagree.

I have the responsibility to make the school safe by not threatening, hitting or hurting anyone in any way.	To be safe.
I have the responsibility to respect other people's property by not stealing, damaging or destroying it.	I expect my property to be safe.
I have the responsibility to cooperate with teachers and other students to make sure that lessons proceed for our advantage and to keep up to date with required work.	To obtain maximum benefit from all lessons, other students will not deprive me of opportunities through their behaviour.
I have the responsibility to be punctual, to attend school regularly and to take part in activities that will be of benefit to me.	To be provided with learning opportunities and that others will not behave in a manner which denies me these opportunities.
I have the responsibility not to abuse my body with inappropriate use of tobacco, alcohol or other drugs or encourage others to do so.	To have the opportunity to learn in a healthy environment and not be coerced by others to be involved in health damaging habits.
I have the responsibility to care for the environment, keep the school clean and be prepared to remove litter.	To have a pleasant, clean and well maintained school and grounds.
I have the responsibility to discourage damage to school property and to tell staff about any defective buildings, fittings or equipment.	To be provided with a school in which I am not in physical danger. When defects occur they will be repaired.
I accept that teachers may more readily see dangers than I do and I will obey their instructions.	To be able to seek guidance and instruction from teachers.
I have the responsibility to behave so that the community will respect our school.	That the local community will support, respect and have pride in my school.
I have the responsibility to exercise self-control.	To be helped to learn self-control.
In desiring my expectations to be fulfilled, I must not deny the expectations of others and understand that I may be corrected if I do so.	That just punishment will be sought if others abuse my expectations or when I abuse the expectations of others.
I have the responsibility to keep my parents informed by taking home newsletters notes, etc.	That the school will foster a sense of community by informing parents about what is happening at school.
I have the responsibility to bring, on the first possible day, a note to explain any absence or special circumstances.	That the school will respond to its obligations in desiring to be informed about relevant matters.

The classroom is the focal point of student welfare. Structures should exist to support the creative relationships of the learning situation, but the pupil – teacher relationship remains at the heart of the matter: ministering the redeeming love of Christ to students by encouragement, punishment, guidance and direction and a multitude of other expressions. Experiencing that redemptive love from other students and staff is the best way we can encourage a positive, faithful response from the students. Then, they will truly learn to accept responsibility for their lives, become more self-disciplined in every area, fulfilling their communal obligations and serving Christ Himself.

Teacher and Classroom Management

The class teacher, developing relationships with students in a wide variety of situations is the initiator and sustainer of good quality student welfare. Teachers need to be actively involved in the many facets of student welfare according to their giftedness.

Within the classroom especially, the class teacher is the consistent administrator of a defacto system of rewards and punishments. A smile or a negative look is often enough to encourage or discourage certain behaviour. So the process of encouraging a right response is going on all the time in a classroom. Indeed, there is a strong dependence of the students on the very structuring of the learning environment. Lesson planning, class organisation etc. influence mightily, the nature of their response. All classroom practitioners do well to ask themselves, "Am I structuring my classroom to facilitate the most positive response possible? Is my teaching methodology appropriate?" Some times our confrontationist approaches allow no positive response to students, just suppression of negative responses. All staff must therefore develop an understanding of students behaviour and expertise in classroom management. Moreover, the School also has some responsibility in helping to develop staff expertise in these areas if deficiencies are perceived.

The basis of the teacher – pupil relationship lies in the recognition of the balance between truth and love. In fact, neither can truly exist without the other tempering it. Truth becomes judgemental without love; love becomes sentimentalised without truth. As we look at appropriate rewards and punishments, classroom structures etc., the intertwined concepts of Truth and Love must govern our thinking.

How will students know they are loved?

Communicating love to students involves, for a Christian teacher:

- Respecting and caring about students as those who are made in the image of God, who have an eternal purpose and who are accountable to God.
- Using every possible means available to affirm the student and to encourage; to listen to them; to be prepared to change and adapt teaching methods as the student grows towards maturity.
- Praying specifically and individually for them.
- Being prepared to spend out-of-class time with a student to get to know him/her as a person and not just as a student in the teacher's class.
- Being prepared to spend time out of class to help a student with a problem who may have chosen you to discuss the problem with.
- Seeking to understand reasons why a student may not be achieving to his/her potential, or may be misbehaving or appearing depressed etc., and to take the reasons into account when teaching or relating to that student.
- Being patient, forgiving and not bearing a grudge. Willing to apologise if the teacher has made a mistake.
- Modelling adult Christian behaviour, character and attitudes in all situations, including overtly expressing your faith and how it applies to daily living. Setting a good example has a great impact on the students.
- Allowing for fundamental differences in each individual, including in the way by which each learns. Being prepared to adapt teaching methods to allow for each child's needs to be met. There should be scope and encouragement for students to express themselves individually outside a competitive structure.
- Encouraging an atmosphere in the classroom, which makes the student feel safe and secure to experiment with ideas and to discuss problems etc. without fear of ridicule.

How does the structure of the classroom and its management reflect love for the students?

Some practical suggestions:-

- Vary lesson strategies
- Be enthusiastic about teaching
- Prepare all lessons thoroughly and creatively.
- Prepare work suitable to the ages/abilities of the students.
- Be prompt to class.
- Address students by Christian name.
- Establish guidelines for:
 - a) classroom organisation
 - b) entry and dismissal procedures
 - c) bookwork, assignments
 - d) communicating within the class –
 - i) teacher-pupil
 - ii) pupil-pupil

- Move around the room
- Use rewards e.g. verbal; material (merit cards).
- Use eye contact.
- Allow students to hold an opinion/be prepared to listen to that opinion.
- Give warning signals for unacceptable behavior.
- Be fair and consistent in:
 - a) rewards
 - b) punishment
 - c) marking
- Balance negative comments with positive comments when appropriate.
- Defuse potential confrontational situations.
- Give students reasons.
- Use teaching methods which encourage co-operation and develop a sense of community more than individualism.

Punishment and Reward

In their behaviour, our students are challenged to try their utmost to reflect the character of Christ Himself: gentle towards others and obedient to God, intolerant of injustice and willing to lead others by His example. Like Christ, students are to view all with whom they come into contact as their neighbours, they are to love their enemies and show respect to those with whom they may disagree. To these ends, students' must:

- Show respect towards God;
- Show respect towards themselves;
- Show respect towards others; and
- Show respect towards their environment as God's creation.

When students are identifiable as coming from Mamre Anglican School, they can make a great impact on the entire community. With this in mind, high standards of conduct characterise students from Mamre Anglican School. The School operates a discipline system which is firm, reasoned and loving. Students are expected to behave in a manner which reflects their pride in being identified with this School.

Reward

The ultimate reward for a student should be the knowledge that they are doing God's will for them. The faithful response of service to God and other people is a reward in itself.

There is also an intrinsic reward in completed work. The end product of a learning process (such as an essay, a meal or a piece of pottery) gives the creator/student a great deal of satisfaction generally. An overly-critical attitude can, of course, destroy that sense of accomplishment. On the other hand, an undiscerning approval can devalue the sense of accomplishment.

Especially when students are maturing, external rewards and punishments meted out by the teacher will be necessary. Some possible rewards are:

- displays of work
- merit cards
- verbal praise
- individualised evaluation of work
- prize giving

Wherever reward is given, it must not be restricted to academic achievement. Progress in every area must have its reward. Expression and development of individual talents is equally important for less academically-oriented students and more able students therefore recognise application as well as achievement.

The reward the School community reaps is the resulting caring environment, a place where students feel safe, secure and affirmed.

Punishment

Students who betray the trust which has been shown in them or who violate the behaviour principles of the School and have been given reasonable opportunity to explain their actions must expect to face the consequences.

Discipline is a natural part of a balanced role in pastoring students. It does not spoil a relationship to discipline a student; it is an integral part of it. Therefore, wherever possible, each teacher should administer his/her own disciplinary measures.

It should be done in love, not anger, recognising that many problems may be related to factors external to the situation (e.g. marriage breakup in the child's family).

Whether students are performing well or in a disappointing manner, communication with parents is crucial and should be done frequently. Parent-teacher interviews and regular written reports are major components of communication, but communication by individual teachers to parents, in writing or by telephone, should also be done as frequently as appropriate. It is difficult for the school to answer the criticism of parents who, upon receiving a poor report for their child, ask "Why was I not informed that he/she was having difficulties before it got to this stage?" Parents should be contacted by the class teachers for both "good news" and "bad news" occasions.

Some possible punishments:

- A full apology
- Picking up papers
- Lunchtime detentions
- Withdrawal of privilege
- Referral to counselor
- Reports to parents
- Interview with Senior Staff member
- Interview with the Principal

In severe cases, this may mean:

- Suspension – the temporary removal of a student from all of the classes that a student would normally attend at a school for a set period of time. Suspension is determined by the Principal
- Expulsion – the permanent removal of a student from the school – a last resort which is nonetheless sometimes in the best interests of the individual and the other students in the school community. In the event that the reason for expulsion involves criminal acts, the matter will be referred to the appropriate authority, such as the police or child services, who will be entrusted to deal with the matter in the appropriate manner according to the law. Expulsion is determined by the Principal.
- Exclusion – in an extreme circumstance the Principal may contact other local schools and recommend to the Heads of those schools permanent exclusion from those schools.

Where a long suspension, expulsion or exclusion is contemplated, procedural fairness is of utmost priority. This may involve a parent or support person being present during the formal interview process. Written documentation would be recorded during such interviews.

Where the offending behavior is of such a nature that it may result in suspension or expulsion, the student will be:

- a) informed of the alleged infringement;
- b) informed as to who will make the decision on the penalty;
- c) informed of the procedures to be followed which will include an opportunity to have a parent or guardian present when responding to the allegations; and
- d) afforded a right of review of appeal.

A review of appeal should take place as follows:

- The HOSS or HOJS will reach a decision in relation to the allegation and recommend the penalty to be imposed to the Principal. The parents will be informed of the finding and recommendation and may make representations to the Principal in respect of the finding and recommendation. The Principal then makes a final decision.

Note:

1. The writing out of lines is of most dubious disciplinary value and the writing of lines should not be given as a punishment at this school. However, the writing of an apology or the writing of an explanation of the inappropriateness of one's actions can be beneficial in assisting the student to acknowledge and accept responsibility for behaviour choices.
2. Students are not to be sent outside classrooms for long periods of time. This strategy is to be used for a "cooling off" period only.
3. **Mamre Anglican School expressly prohibits the use of corporal punishment under any circumstances.**
4. **Mamre Anglican School does not explicitly or implicitly sanction the administration of corporal punishment by non-school persons, including parents to enforce discipline at the school.**

The School Uniform

The School uniform is seen as having a bearing on the overall quality of student welfare.

The School has a uniform because:

1. It discourages unhealthy competition between students regarding quality of dress.
2. It is economical.
3. It is aesthetically pleasing.
4. It encourages students to identify with the School community.
5. It enables the outside community to gain their first impression of us (and therefore to maintain a certain image in an increasing competitive education market).
6. It frees students from peer pressure to conform to dress norms they are happier without (e.g. length of skirt and "brand name" clothing).
7. It helps to establish a tone both in discipline and attitude to study.