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## PREAMBLE

The Biblical mandate for the discipline of children is given by God to parents. (Ephesians 6:1-4) As a Christian school we are given the responsibility by our constituent parents to care for and discipline their children while they are in our care. This responsibility is very serious and demands that we take great care and fore-thought in the discipline process. Excessive discipline has a destructive effect on students and therefore has no place at Heathdale Christian College.

While attending Heathdale Christian College, students have the right to be safe at all times, to further their education with the minimum interruption, and to enjoy the College program to their maximum benefit. The College has a system of student regulation designed for the class-room teacher to administer. Further information on College rules and procedures can be found in the College Staff Handbook and the Parent Handbook. Parents are expected to support the College rules and administration of discipline when they sign their enrolment contract. These usual discipline issues are mostly attended to by the class-room teacher to the satisfaction of students, parents and College staff.

A more senior staff member (such as the Year Level Co-ordinator, an Assistant Principal, usually the Head of School) may also become involved in the discipline of a student. At any point the staff involved are encouraged and advised to include parents in the discipline of their children. This is not only a good discipline strategy, it also keeps parents fully informed on the conduct and academic and social progress of their child.

At times the College may recommend the services of an outside professional body to support/help in the discipline process (eg counselor, psychologist, pediatrician)

## PRINCIPLES OF STUDENT DISCIPLINE

The process of student discipline needs to have the following features:

1. Pastoral Care - At all times student discipline needs to have in mind the well being and pastoral care of the student(s) concerned, as well as the larger student body..
2. Reasonable - That student discipline administered by teaching staff is based on reasonable grounds, and effected in a reasonable manner. Discipline strategies should be based on a framework sanctioned by the Heads of School, and as a result of teaching staff discussion and training within the College School Staff meetings (School in this context means either Senior School, Middle School or Junior School).
3. Fairness – that justice is done. That there is a fair hearing and/or investigation by an unbiased person and have the right to know the case against them. Parties

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- have the opportunity to comment on material that may result in findings adverse to them, without breaching other students/staff confidentiality.
4. Timeliness – all discipline issues should be dealt with promptly and thoroughly with a view of finding a resolution as soon as practical.
  5. Confidentiality – That all documentation and discussion associated with student discipline will be treated as confidential. Relevant information will be retained on the more serious discipline issues, and then a specific confidential file to which access will be restricted to a 'need to know' basis only will be activated.
  6. Parental Involvement – Every effort will be made to involve parents in the process of the discipline of their children. The college should always operate on the principle that more communication with parents is better. At every point in the process the question should be asked "Should I inform the parents?". Heathdale is in a partnership with parents in the education and nurture of their children, it is their right to know how the college is discharging that responsibility.

## SANCTIONED DISCIPLINE ACTIONS

This section should be read in conjunction with the following section 'Serious Discipline Issues'.

**Verbal Warning and Reprimand** – where a staff member warns a student of a misdemeanor, reprimands the student and no further action is taken. This reprimand should be in a calm and controlled manner at all times.

**Class room discipline** – where a teacher requires a student to conform to disciplinary action for issues of a minor nature. The discipline employed would be reasonable and in harmony with the guidelines set by Senior staff (as in 2. above).

**Detention** – where a student is required to spend time with a teacher in a supervised situation during recess, lunch, after normal College hours, Saturday mornings, or any other time agreed to with the student's parents. Students may be required to assist by doing reasonable and appropriate tasks. Examples of such tasks could be (but not limited to) completing unfinished class work, rubbish collection, room cleaning, gardening, move furniture, washing buses, etc. This sort of action may involve the Year Level Co-ordinator and / or the Head of School, or it may be effected by the Class room Teacher for continued minor breaches of the rules of the College.

**Discipline Administered by Parents** – where the College discusses with the parents for the need for disciplinary action with their child, and the parent agrees to take responsibility for such disciplinary action. This sort of action may involve the Year Level Co-ordinator and / or the Head of School, or it may be effected by the Class room Teacher for continued minor breaches of the rules of the College.

**Timeout** – for a Junior School student that continues to behave poorly, or has lost control, and needs to be withdrawn from the class room. The student would be placed in the care of a teaching staff member (usually a Year Level Co-ordinator or the Head of School), to give the student the opportunity to reflect on actions and calm down. This is usually for a period of 20 to 40 minutes, and no longer than one hour. The parent may or may not be informed, depending on the severity, the circumstances and the continuing nature of the problem.

**Internal Suspension** – where it is deemed a student should not attend normal classes nor has any student interaction for a period of time. This action would be sanctioned by the Head of School, and generally would be the result of a Serious Discipline Issue (see below). Parents must be advised and involved.

**Suspension** – This is when a student is required to remain off the College campus for a set period of time. This action would be sanctioned by the Head of School, the Principal advised, and would be the result of a Serious Discipline issue. Parents must be advised and involved. This action will occur when the College needs to discuss with the parents the future of the student in the College.

**Enrolment Cancellation** – where an ongoing unresolved discipline issue continues to be a matter of concern, and where the College and the parents are at odds on how the situation should be resolved, the College reserves the right to cancel a student's enrolment. The parents would receive one months written notification.

**Expulsion** – when a student is expelled as a result of Serious Discipline Issue(s) (see below). This is where a student has consistently refused to conform to the proper direction of the College, or when a student has seriously compromised the safety of staff and/or students. The staff directly involved should be unanimous that the student should not stay, and that they could not cope anymore, or other students need to be deemed to be at risk if the student stayed. The Pastoral Carer's perspective also needs to be taken into account. Please note that re-enrollment of an Expelled Student could be considered after a period of at least one year where there is evidence of marked change, and where there is evidence of appropriate and genuine repentance.

In the case where parents do not support or agree with the College in the proper discipline and direction of the student according to College rules, and as agreed in their enrolment contract, parents in this case should be given the opportunity to withdraw their child from the College roll.

**Please Note.**

1. That the discipline practice of Corporal Punishment is not allowed under any circumstances at Heathdale Christian College.

2. Physical handling of students may be appropriate and necessary at times, such as ensuring the safety of students, staff and other students, but it should not be a regular/normal course of action (see the Staff Handbook, Harassment Policy).

## SERIOUS DISCIPLINE ISSUES

**A Serious Discipline Incident** has occurred if:-

1. A student continues to refuse to take direction from College staff, or a student seriously disobeys the College rules to disrupt and undermine staff authority; or
2. A student seriously disobeys the College rules to endanger the safety of themselves and/or their peers; or
3. A student seriously disobeys the College rules to disrupt and undermine the College educational program for them and their peers;

The student has then placed themselves or their peers outside the proper influence of the College derived from parental delegation, parent agreement, and legal responsibility. The student is therefore endangering the safety, well-being and academic progress of themselves and their peers and the College may decide it is necessary for the student to be excluded from normal College classes and activities until the College is satisfied the student no longer poses a threat in this way.

## RESOLVING SERIOUS DISCIPLINE ISSUES

Most discipline issues are attended to by the class-room teacher to the satisfaction of students, parents and College staff, but in the case of a Serious Discipline incident, the following needs to be adhered to as a matter of policy:

1. The Head of School will decide in conjunction with associated staff (the Year Level Co-ordinator, the Pastoral Carer, other Assistant Principals, the class-room teacher and as appropriate) on a course of action. (see page 2, 'Sanctioned Discipline Action')
2. Staff will commence to document the issues associated with a Serious Incident, if this has not already commenced. This will include notes on any interviews with students or staff.
3. The Principal will be notified and kept fully informed.

If the intended course of action expulsion, go to 8 below;

If the intended course of action is Internal Suspension, go to 4:

4. The student will be isolated immediately and the parents will be informed and invited to attend an interview with their child as soon as possible to discuss the situation. The meeting will include the Head of School, Year Level Co-ordinator, other appropriate staff, parent(s) and student. Parents will be briefed on the

- reasons for Internal Suspension and then discuss any concerns or suggestions from the parents. Hitherto unknown-extenuating circumstances can then be considered before a final decision to proceed with Internal Suspension is made by the Head of School.
5. The student will be readmitted to the College program when the Head of School is satisfied the student will conform to the requirements of the College. This may be in the form of a contract or agreement with the student and the parent(s), with consequences for contravening the requirements of the contract or agreement.
  6. A report from a professional body, such as Paediatrician, Behavioural Psychologist, Counselor, etc may be utilised.
  7. In the event of parents not supporting the College in the administration of student discipline, the student will be suspended until the issue is resolved or the student is withdrawn.

If the intended course of action is Expulsion;

8. The student will be suspended until the parents are informed and attend an interview with their child (as appropriate for younger students) to determine the student's and staff's interpretation of events. Parents and student will be informed of the intended course of action (ie Expulsion) and then listen to extra information parents may have, their wishes and their suggestions. Hitherto unknown-extenuating circumstances can then be considered, and the Head of School may decide to change the intent and change the decision.
9. If the Head of School still feels it is appropriate to expel the student, the parents will then be given the option of 2 days to consider the interview and speak with nominated staff in the presence of a Senior Staff member. Interviewing of other students by the parents will not be permitted.
10. The Head of School will fully brief the Principal with documented evidence and explain his/her decisions.
11. In the event where a student has contravened a previously agreed contract or agreement with the College (in 5 above), and the consequences for contravening the terms of the contract or agreement is expulsion, the student will be expelled without further discussion.
12. Parents and student will meet with the Head of School. The resolution of the issue, such as behaviour modification, warnings, professional counseling, suspensions, student withdrawal or expulsion may be discussed.
13. If need be and if the issue has not been resolved, parents will be given a further two days until a third meeting for the College to deliver its final decision.
14. Parents may be given the option of withdrawing their child from the College roll throughout this process.
15. After this the decision of the College will be final and implemented.

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