



## Milkwood Steiner Discipline Policy

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### POLICY

Each child at Milkwood Steiner School needs love and security, wise loving discipline and the kind of protection that leads to the gradual acquisition of independence.

All disciplinary actions must be at their very heart, educative – and designed to lead the child upward in their development. The School does not use corporal punishment under any circumstances.

#### 1.1 Background

Our approach to discipline is underpinned by the principles in Appendix 1 of this policy.

#### 1.2 Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to provide clear guidelines to staff parents/carers and students about the school's expectations regarding behaviour at school.

#### 1.3 Relevant Legislation

(NT) Education Act 28 August 2013

[http://notes.nt.gov.au/dcm/legislat/legislat.nsf/d989974724db65b1482561cf0017cbd2/977b0db7022de83169257bdd00163eb5/\\$FILE/ATTL6TBS.pdf/Rep e002.pdf](http://notes.nt.gov.au/dcm/legislat/legislat.nsf/d989974724db65b1482561cf0017cbd2/977b0db7022de83169257bdd00163eb5/$FILE/ATTL6TBS.pdf/Rep e002.pdf)

(NT) Anti-Discrimination Act 1 March 2011

[http://notes.nt.gov.au/dcm/legislat/legislat.nsf/d989974724db65b1482561cf0017cbd2/59b26920603f6a266925784c000708a7/\\$FILE/Repa027.pdf](http://notes.nt.gov.au/dcm/legislat/legislat.nsf/d989974724db65b1482561cf0017cbd2/59b26920603f6a266925784c000708a7/$FILE/Repa027.pdf)

(Cwth) Anti-discrimination legislation (Disability / Racial Discrimination Acts)

<http://www.antidiscrimination.gov.au/Pages/Commonwealth.aspx>

#### 1.4 Definitions

*Procedural fairness* means using a process which is fair to the person adversely affected by a decision and includes:

- giving the person a hearing by putting allegations/adverse material to the person concerned and allowing them to provide a response to that material
- acting without bias

- making reasonable inquiries and ensuring that a decision is based upon findings of fact with sound reasoning and relevant evidence.
- providing the person adversely affected by a decision with an avenue of review of the decision

## **1. RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **2.1 Teachers**

- 2.1.1 Teachers must act in accordance with the principles set out in this policy.
- 2.1.2 Teacher's conduct must be consistent with the school's Code of Conduct and reflect the school's considered stance on attendance, punctuality, care of property and environment, care and respect for each other, violent or aggressive behaviour and abusive language.
- 2.1.3 The teacher must keep good documentary evidence of any incidents which occur.
- 2.1.4 The teacher must act according to the principles of natural justice.
- 2.1.5 The teachers as a collegium must pre-appoint a person to act on their behalf if they so wish to seek assistance in behaviour management in the absence of the Principal.

### **2.2 Principal**

- 2.2.1 The Principal must act according to the principles of natural justice.
- 2.2.2 The Principal's responsibilities are otherwise as set out below in this policy.
- 2.2.3 In the absence of the Principal, Principal responsibility defaults to the Senior Teacher. This person has the same responsibility as the Principal.

### **2.3 Parents/Carers**

- 2.3.1 As set out below in this policy.

## **GENERAL PROCEDURES 3.1**

### **Primary School**

- 3.1.1 Unacceptable behaviour for primary school students includes behaviour which contravenes the playground or classroom rules set out in Appendix 3 of this policy as well as damage to property inside and outside the classroom. This policy applies to students in the primary school.
- 3.1.2 In responding to unacceptable behaviour the class teacher shall apply the Steiner principles set out in Appendix 1 of this policy and may apply the principles of restorative justice set out in Appendix 2 of this policy

## **3.2 Kindergarten**

3.2.1 Unacceptable behaviour in the kindergarten will be dealt with in accordance with the Kindergarten discipline rules in Appendix 4.

3.2.2 Where there is chronic unacceptable behaviour in a kindergarten student who has turned six years of age, the Kindergarten senior teacher in consultation with the Principal may decide that the behaviour will instead be dealt with in accordance with the general discipline policy for the primary school set out below.

## **3.3 Acute or Isolated Incidents**

3.3.1 The teacher will in the first instance respond to the incident(s) by working with the student(s) in a remedial, therapeutic or disciplinary manner, depending on the individual or the behaviour.

3.3.2 The teacher's first response to minor misdemeanors may include:

- ☐ Request and instruction
- ☐ General reminder/specific warning
- ☐ Chance for redemption
- ☐ Change of seating
- ☐ Conversation at break times
- ☐ Informal detention
- ☐ Time out (In view of the teacher)
- ☐ Time out with another teacher or a person pre-appointed by the College of Teachers.

## **3.4 Chronic Unacceptable behaviour**

3.4.1 Where a student's behaviour continues to be of concern to the class teacher and first responses have not produced a change, the class teacher will speak with the child's parents/carers, to inform them of concerns and to establish ways of working together to support the student to modify their behaviour.

3.4.2 The Class Teacher will share all relevant information with the College of Teachers and the Principal who will assist according to their responsibility for every child in the school.

3.4.3 The Class Teachers may institute the use of a daily report book, and all teachers, including duty teachers, will be asked to report on behaviour during lessons and at break time. External support services may be involved for external assessments and reports with recommendations.

3.4.4 After a predetermined period of time, the report book will be evaluated with the teacher, child and the parents/carers. Being placed on a report book is a serious matter and the result of the evaluation will therefore result in an agreement on future behaviour and conditions of continued enrolment.  
A 3-day suspension may be considered appropriate.

3.4.6 If after a suspension there is no change, the child may be expelled.

3.4.7 On the advice of the Class Teacher, the Principal may be asked to mediate at any time in this process (except in the case of pre-meditated or extreme violence where the School has a policy of an immediate two-day suspension). The Principal will recommend an appropriate course of action.

## **4. SERIOUS MISBEHAVIOUR**

### **4.1 Violent or Aggressive Behaviour**

4.1.1 Any form of violent behaviour will not be condoned.

4.1.2 Where violent behaviour occurs

- i. The person who witnessed the incident (teacher on duty, teacher or student) should report the matter to the child's class teacher.
- ii. An incident report form must be completed, registered and filed in the Incident Report Folder and on the Student's File.
- iii. The class teacher will consult with the Principal and make a determination about the severity of the incident. A violent incident is considered to be severe if it is clearly pre-meditated or if the child's current behaviour is chronically unacceptable.
- iv. If it is determined that the incident is severe, the student will be immediately suspended for at least two days. The Principal makes the decision to suspend and will be responsible for informing the child's parents/ carers.
- v. In instances deemed not to be severe the school may deal with the incident using Steiner principles or restorative justice and/or it may send the child home for the day.
- vi. In all instances of violent behaviour the Principal will interview all parties involved and make a report to the Class Teacher and the College.
- vii. The Principal, with the Class Teacher will meet with student and parents/ carers to set out conditions for the student continuing at school.
- viii. Any further aggressive or violent behaviour will result in an immediate suspension for a week.
- ix. Re-admission to the school will be probationary and subject to stringent conditions.
- x. Any subsequent offence will result in expulsion.

### **4.2 Abusive Language**

4.2.1 Milkwood Steiner School believes that it is extremely important for us to help make students more aware of the language that they use, especially today when derogatory and obscene words have become so commonplace in the vocabulary of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. We recognise the power of abusive language when it is directed with intent to injure.

4.2.1 Where a student continually resorts to the use of abusive language with fellow students or staff, their behaviour will be dealt with as chronic unacceptable behaviour or, if necessary, as violent and aggressive behaviour.

### 4.3 Bullying

4.3.1 Milkwood Steiner School is committed to ensuring that all staff and students are able to work and learn in a safe environment, free from harassment and bullying.

4.3.2 All forms of bullying are considered serious as this can damage self-esteem and form a barrier to effective teaching and learning. The classroom programs build pupils' confidence, develop self-esteem and enable pupils to assert themselves positively.

4.3.3 Bullying is abuse of power, discrimination which causes offence to another, or invasion of another's personal dignity or personal privacy. It is repeated oppression, harassment, psychological or physical abuse of one person by another person(s). It involves:

- i. a desire to hurt
- ii. a hurtful action
- iii. a power imbalance
- iv. repetition
- v. an unjust use of power
- vi. a sense of being oppressed on the part of the victim

Without limiting the above, bullying can take any of the following forms:

- i. Intimidation: any threat, verbal or physical action that frightens another.  
Physical – hitting, pushing and shoving, hair pulling
- ii. Psychological – verbal – social banter, insults, name calling, teasing, threatening.
- iii. Nonverbal – nasty body language, offensive gestures
- iv. Indirect harm – spreading rumours, hurtful gossip, exclusion, social manipulation.
- v. Racial harassment - behaviour of an offensive nature towards another which occurs by reason of the race, colour, ethnic or national origin of the other.

Bullying is not the same as conflict or disagreement, even though these also cause distress in many children.

4.3.3 Where bullying is reported, the teacher will talk with the children involved either separately or as a group and make a decision as to whether the report is, on the face of it, substantiated and thus requires further action.

4.3.4 If bullying is found to have taken place then:

- i. An apology will be required
- ☐ This will most likely be in the form of looking the person in the eye, a verbal apology and a handshake.
- ☐ Where age appropriate the teacher may also require a handwritten apology from the child saying s/he is sorry for the behaviour and what s/he is going to do to heal the

situation for all. This is time out because it involves the child missing a reasonable part of recess or lunchtime.

ii. A verbal checking in with the child will take place

- ☐ This is to make sure that there is no recurrence. The talk with the child would be concerned with whether the child has learned that it is unacceptable behaviour and that they will not do it again.
- ☐ For the younger students this check-in would happen at the end of the day that the incident took place. With older students it might take place the following day to allow the child to reflect upon the incident and come back prepared to acknowledge the unacceptable behaviour and the process of healing the situation.

iii. Teachers may choose to use restorative justice techniques in dealing with initial cases of bullying.

iv. A third occurrence of bullying or a serious case of bullying involving a child being seriously hurt will be dealt with in the same manner as for violent incidents.

- ☐ In these cases, an immediate 2-day suspension will occur
- ☐ The parents/carers and child will be required to attend a meeting with the Teacher and Principal
- ☐ A process will be put in place to determine the conditions under which the child may re-enter the school.

4.3.5 The Principal may offer the family of the victim of the bullying assistance with seeking appropriate support.

4.3.6 Students alerting adults to acts of bullying will be protected from victimization. Students will be encouraged to report bullying.

4.3.3.7 Everyone involved in a complaint of bullying will be treated fairly with the complaint resolved as quickly as possible, and with the feelings of all involved respected and procedural fairness principles applied.

4.3.8 Monitoring and follow-up will take place to ensure the bullying ceases.

4.3.9 Complaints about bullying from parents on behalf of their child will be dealt with in accordance with this policy.

4.3.10 Students will be clearly informed of the content of the bullying policy and that it is the expectation of the whole school community (teachers, parents and children) that it will be followed. The most positive outcome for the children will happen when teachers and parents work together. The staff will take every opportunity to acknowledge positive behaviour in assemblies, in the classroom and on the playground.

4.3.11 The staff, students and parent community will be regularly informed about prevention of harassment and bullying including information via class parent/teacher evenings, the school newsletter, dissemination of specific publications to parents, the school's parent handbook, and interaction with outside agencies.

## **5. ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY 5.1**

### **Attendance**

5.4.1 Attendance at school is compulsory for children aged 6 years and over except in the case of sickness or absence for special circumstances (with prior approval of the teacher). Parents are required to notify the school of an absence and give a reason. Ongoing unexplained or poorly explained absences by a child requires action by school staff.

5.4.2 School staff should explain to parents the consequences of inconsistent attendance:

- i. Academic - Gaps in knowledge caused by absence is compounded by further absence. The level of achievement of the whole of the class can be held back by the poor academic progress of students in the class who are consistently absent.
- ii. Social - Learning difficulties caused by consistent absence often leads to difficult behaviour. Continual absence compromises the child's ability to feel safe and comfortable in their peer group
- iii. Legal - School must report any un-notified absence to the Department of Education and Training and a prosecution may follow as a consequence.

5.4.3 Cases of poor attendance will be initially followed up by the Class Teacher with parents/ carers.

5.4.4 If the poor attendance continues the Principal will meet with the parents/ carers to attempt to negotiate an improvement in attendance. The Principal may refer the parents/carers to outside support agencies for assistance in dealing with their situation.

5.4.5 Continued poor attendance will seem to be untenable for the child and the child's class. The Principal will write to the parents/ carers putting them on notice that the child's place in the school is in jeopardy. A further interview with parents/ carers may be necessary. If there is still no improvement the Principal may consider expulsion of the child from the school.

### **5.2 Punctuality**

5.2.1 Milkwood Steiner School regards rhythm and form as essential to hygienic Steiner School pedagogy. It is very disruptive to the class and the rhythm of the lesson for students to come in after a lesson has started. Expectations of punctuality also encourage a healthy respect for work and study.

5.2.2 Students must be at school to start for 8.15am. [However, for supervision/safety reasons there is to be no drop-off of students before 8.00am.]

5.2.3 The model of teachers who are punctual and responsible in their commitments will encourage students to develop self-responsibility in this area. Teachers must be at school by 8.00am.

5.2.4 Teachers will follow up lateness and take action appropriate to the student and class level. Consistent lateness will be addressed by the procedure outlined above for attendance.

## **6. SUSPENSION AND EXPULSION**

### **6.1 Responsibility for decision**

The Principal. makes the decision to suspend or expel using the principles of natural justice

### **6.2 Process for suspension or expulsion**

6.2.1 The Principal shall in all cases (except in the initial response to incidents of severe violent behaviour as outlined above) apply the principles of natural justice to his/her decision to suspend or expel, including meeting with the child's parents / carers.

6.2.2 After making the decision the Principal will write to the parents/ carers clearly stating the reasons for the suspension or expulsion and outlining the right the parents/ carers have to a review of the suspension or expulsion decision.

### **6.3 Process for review of the decision to expel or suspend a student**

6.3.1 The parents who wish to have the decision to suspend or expel reviewed must do so in writing to the Principal within a reasonable time of the decision being made using Form 1 attached to this policy.

6.3.2 On receipt of the request for review the Principal will in the first instance reconsider his/her decision to suspend or expel in light of the material provided by the child's parents/ carers.

6.3.3 If the decision is confirmed the Principal will immediately advise the parents/ carers and refer the review request to the Chair of the school's Governing Body. The request for review will then be dealt with as a grievance under the school's Communication Policy. The Principal will not be part of the Grievance Team.

## **7. REVIEW OF TEACHERS' DISCIPLINARY ACTIONS**

Milkwood Steiner School acknowledges that staff response in discipline matters must be consistent and consequential and that expectations of consideration and respect apply to teachers as well as students.

### **7.1 Teacher performance review**

Teacher decisions under this policy can be included in a teacher's performance review under the school's performance management procedures.

### **7.2 Parent complaints**

If a parent/ carer has concerns about disciplinary action taken by a teacher, the parent/ carer should be directed to the school's Communication Policy which contains the procedure for making a complaint.

## APPENDIX 1

## STEINER BEHAVIOUR MANAGEMENT PRINCIPLES

Children learn a great deal by imitating significant adults, especially in the younger years. The small child is essentially imitative and is supported above all by security and routine. The child in the later primary years seeks the authority of teachers who inspire confidence in the child by their own example. Discipline is based on mutual respect and humanity. The child obeys because she/he respects the teacher and wishes to please. Children behave themselves best in the presence of adults they respect.

The teacher's approach to discipline should be based on answers that arise from the following questions:

- ☐ What do I want to encourage in this child?
- ☐ What problems or limitations need to be overcome?
- ☐ What social customs and etiquette need to be learned?
- ☐ Is my perception of the child's strengths and weaknesses accurate or do I need more information, e.g. health professional assessments?
- ☐ Are the expectations or issues important enough to pursue?
- ☐ Can I or should I be more flexible?

### Teachers should:

- ☐ Be conscious of their actions to provide a positive role model, for example by being honest, loving and kind, showing self-control and apologising for mistakes and loss of temper.
- ☐ Aim to know the child and look for the causes of misbehaviour - the direct and indirect - so that situations or conflicts involving 'bad' behaviour can be viewed out of compassion for the child.
- ☐ Develop an awareness of the child's behaviour and encourage behaviours which 'really matter' in the world.

### School rules

Children should clearly understand what is and is not deemed acceptable behaviour at school. Classroom and school rules should be clearly stated at regular intervals. No matter how such rules are phrased, they will all reflect the single underlying expectation that one should on all occasions treat others only as you would like others to treat you. This extends to our living and non-living environment.

Through this the teacher upholds essential human dignity and helps to cultivate a sense in the child that they should never allow themselves to be treated thoughtlessly or without respect by another human being.

### Consequences of misbehaviour should:

- ☐ Be specific to the individual child. This appeals to the child's individuality and wakes it up. The consequences will be better understood by the child.
- ☐ Be perceived by the child as a necessary and unavoidable consequence of what has happened. The experience of justice helps to awaken the child.
- ☐ Be appropriate to the nature of the misdeed. This awakens a feeling of remorse which has a cleansing effect on the soul and rouses and clears the consequences. The remorse is redeemed through action.
- ☐ Be imposed with an expression of regret about the situation so the child understands that the situation has had a personal impact on the teacher. If the consequences are imposed in an entirely unconcerned manner the child will feel this as hard-heartedness which hurts far more than the punishment itself.

In this way the child's power of discrimination has become subtler and surer, the will forces are stronger and more active, the consciousness has become clearer, more awake and comprehending, and the child's love for the good has grown. The child has taken a step forwards and upwards.

## APPENDIX 2

## RESTORATIVE JUSTICE PRINCIPLES

The traditional response to conflicts has been to ask: What happened? Who is to blame? What is the appropriate response to deter and possibly punish those at fault, so they will not do the same thing again?

### The traditional (punitive) approach

- ❑ does not take into account the needs of those who have been harmed or distressed by the wrongdoing,
- ❑ Does not take into account the desirability of repairing relationships between people who are still likely to be seeing each other regularly in their community and at school.
- ❑ Can make a child angry and resentful rather than thoughtful.
- ❑ Is based on the often, incorrect assumption that punishment will and can change behaviour and act as a deterrent.
- ❑ Sends the message that inflicting punishment is what one does when others behave in ways we do not like.
- ❑ Fosters a response to conflicts in the playground which is merely a reproduction of the behaviour learnt from adults.
- ❑ Encourages children to be self-centred by focusing the child on avoiding negative consequences for themselves rather than ensuring others' well-being.
- ❑ Is more likely to cause harm on both sides unless both people feel heard and understood.

**Restorative Justice** puts repairing harm done to relationships and people over and above the need for assigning blame and dispensing punishment. It asks

- ❑ Who has been affected by what has happened?
- ❑ What can be done to make things better for all concerned?
- ❑ How can we ensure that everyone involved gets a chance to tell their side of the story and hear everyone' else's perspective?
- ❑ What can be learnt so something like this can be avoided in the future?
  
- ❑ asks children to take responsibility for the impact of their behaviour
- ❑ Teaches children that the consequence of harmful (i.e. upsetting/ distressing/ disruptive/ destructive) behaviour is that relationships are damaged and people get disconnected.
- ❑ Focusses on healing the disconnections between people.
- ❑ Draws in the people best placed to resolve the conflict: the people involved.
- ❑ needs the following attitudes and skills on the part of the teacher:
  - a. A willingness to listen to others' perspectives on a situation and suspend the notion that there is only one way of looking at something.
  - b. An ability to listen to the feelings and needs behind others' words, especially if these words are offensive, hurtful or accusatory.
  - c. An ability to be in touch with one's own feelings and needs so that these can be expressed in a way that gets heard and understood by others.
  - d. A commitment to giving everyone a voice and to respecting the contributions made even though this is a time consuming process.
  - e. A belief that hearing all sides is a worthwhile and ultimately a time saving approach as people gradually learn these processes for themselves.

Talking about needs can be a useful starting point. If children are asked what they need when they have been harmed the answers may be:

1. Someone to listen to my story.
2. Time to calm down.
3. A chance to ask – why me? What did I do to
4. A need for the other person to understand
  - a. and acknowledge the impact their behaviour
  - b. has had on me.
5. A sincere spontaneous apology.
6. Things put right, if possible
7. Reassurance it won't happen again

If children are asked what they need when they themselves have caused harm to someone else, whether on purpose or by accident, answers may include:

1. Time to think
2. Someone to listen to my story
3. A chance to explain to myself and the other
4. Hope that there is no resentment left.

## **APPENDIX 3 GENERAL SCHOOL RULES**

### **Playground**

1. The children are not to leave the school during school hours unless in the presence of or with the knowledge of a teacher.
2. The car park is out of bounds for playing unless the area is closed to outsiders and students are supervised by a teacher or assistant.
3. The toilets are out of bounds for playing.
4. The Kindergarten and its playground are reserved for Kindergarten children.
5. The children are not to play inside the classrooms at lunch and recess time, unless in the presence of a teacher.
6. There is to be no use of school equipment, including sports equipment, before or after school.
7. Shoes are to be worn at all times in the playground and in the event of rain gumboots must be worn for all play in the creek.
8. Hats are compulsory all year, to be worn in breaks and sports/games times that are not under solid cover.
9. No swearing or inappropriate language.
10. Bikes are not to be ridden in the school grounds.
11. Children are to stay seated while eating.

### **Classroom**

1. Students are encouraged to raise their hands if they wish to speak.
2. Everyone listens to the person speaking.
3. Act and move around the room safely, (according to established class routine). Hands are for working and caring.
4. Children must respect others and their property. This means:
  - Show courtesy to others;

- No TV or electronic game talk at school;
- Co-operate with others;
- Follow teacher's instructions;
- Show consideration for all those you meet.

## APPENDIX 4

### Kindergarten Discipline Policy

In kindergarten, when behavior is not appropriate, the first step is redirection. If that is unsuccessful, the child is given a task in the classroom to produce a positive outcome i.e.: drawing quietly, winding wool, cleaning shelves, craft, etc., which helps re-center and settle the child so they can then go calmly back to join in.

In incidents of repeated classroom disruption, consultation with the parents, a plan of action may result in restricted classroom hours i.e.: ½ day or a 3 day week. If there is still no improvement, they may be asked to leave the school.

Children who are 5-6 years old tend to 'discover' swear words. They are given two warnings and on the third, they are sent home.

### FORM 1

#### APPEAL AGAINST A DECISION TO SUSPEND OR EXPEL A STUDENT FROM MILKWOOD STEINER SCHOOL

Student's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Class: \_\_\_\_\_

Person Making Appeal: \_\_\_\_\_

Relationship to Student: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone Numbers: (work) \_\_\_\_\_ (home) \_\_\_\_\_

This appeal is on the grounds that (please tick relevant box)

- a. Correct procedures have not been followed
- b. An unfair decision has been made

Major reasons for appealing (summary only)

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

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(You may attach supporting documents to this form. It is important that all matters which you wish considered in the appeal are mentioned.)

Signature of person making appeal: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Please return this form, together with the attached information to the school in an envelope marked to the attention of the Principal

Checklist:

- \_Have you attached a copy of the notification? \_
- \_Have you attached additional information? \_
- \_Have you completed all information on the form? \_
- \_Have you signed the form? \_