



POLICY AND PROCEDURES MANUAL

Discipline (Foundational Understandings)

CONTENTS

1. Overview.....	2
2. Transforming the Heart	2
3. The Role of the Teacher: Serving Parents, Serving Students	4
3.1 Teacher Responsibility.....	4
3.2 Expectations of Student Behaviour and Learning.....	5
3.3 The Encouragement of Christ-Like Behaviour	6
3.4 The Discouragement of Un-Christ-Like Behaviour	7
4. The Role of the Student: Serving One Another.....	8
4.1 Student Learning.....	8
4.2 Keeping Safe	9
4.3 Show Respect and Earn Respect.....	10
4.4 School Grounds.....	10
4.5 Uniforms.....	11
5. Discipline Procedures	11
5.1 Classroom Behaviour.....	11
5.2 Serious or Severe Behaviour	11
5.3 Consequences of Responsible Behaviour.....	12
6. Whole-College Behaviour Procedure.....	12
6.1 Classroom Teacher.....	12
6.2 Principal.....	13
7. Discipline Policy	14



1. OVERVIEW

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Rehoboth Christian College seeks to provide a learning environment in which all students are protected from harm and places the highest possible priority upon the safety and nurture of young people. The College expects all stakeholders to espouse this approach.

The Rehoboth Christian College community acknowledges the authority and rights of parents in the education of their children. The College's approach to discipline is to regard it as positive – to disciple the young people under our care.

2. TRANSFORMING THE HEART

- a) 'Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect' (Romans 12:2).
- b) We believe that God's purpose for mankind is to glorify God and bring Him pleasure. Because of the presence of sin, we can only do this in the power of the Holy Spirit.
- c) The fulfilment of God's plan, through our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, is to make us partakers of His divine nature and continue in His presence forever.
- d) Our hope for our children is that they develop to maturity and are conformed to the Lord Jesus Christ.
- e) The College's policies should reflect a unique Christ-centred focus, fostering strong partnerships and relationships with our parent community that will assist them in their God-given task of nurturing their children to maturity in Christ. Through a committed, passionate, and well-educated staff we will provide experiences, modelling, and guidance for students that is nurturing and reflects the highest standards of



conduct revealed in the Bible. This will equip students to think with the mind of Christ, so that they may grow in their relationship to God and one another and in doing so, impact their world for God.

- f) God has given parents the responsibility for the nurture of their children by discipline and instruction according to the Bible. In accordance with this responsibility, God has given parents authority over their children to guide and direct them in the way of righteousness.
- g) For their part, God has given children a corresponding responsibility to honour, respect, and obey their parents in the Lord.
- h) The authority of the teacher over the student that is upheld by the whole College community, is given for the effective nurture of the child with the recognition that all authority is given by God to all of us who exercise authority are accountable to Him.
- i) Teachers, acting in the place of the parents in the school environment, who themselves derive their authority from God, will seek to lead students to become like Jesus Christ in their behaviour, both in their personal development and in their relationship with others. To this end, students are taught, guided, advised, and instructed according to Biblical principles.
- j) As staff attempt to imitate God in dealing with students, so students too are encouraged to be Christ-like in their thinking and behaviour and to become His disciples. Part of such discipline involves, among other things, a genuine respect for authority and a willingness to care for those set over them in authority. The qualities of commitment, reliability, trustworthiness, and care for each other are emphasised. Each student is encouraged to see his or her talents as a gift from God, to be employed in serving Him in trust and obedience.
- k) Discipline is something that is done **for** the student, not **to** him or her. It means guiding the student toward maturity and the development of character. Discipline is to instruct, educate, guide, and train with faithful consistency. It is more than giving orders and rules or punishing misbehaviour; it is the making of a disciple, the development of Christ-like behaviour. There are two elements to discipline:
 - i. **constructive** measures (the encouragement of Christ-like behaviour) seek to build self-discipline in students; and
 - ii. **corrective** measures (or the discouragement of un-Christ-like behaviour) are also necessary at times.
- l) The purpose of discipline is to disciple students in the Lord's way. It addresses the future, while punishment only looks back. Discipline is an opportunity to redirect students to strive against sin and to overcome weakness, to build inner peace and righteousness, and to partake in the holiness of God. Through discipline, students must realise the grace of God.



- m) Discipline may not be harsh retribution. It may not cause bitterness from perceived lack of grace and forgiveness (van Brummelen, *Walking with God in the Classroom* p69). The use of any form of child abuse, corporal punishment, or other degrading punishment in the discipline of students is expressly forbidden.
- n) The desired goal of discipline is for students to take responsibility for their own behaviour. Students are encouraged to live in community, sensitive to the needs of others and willing to serve others. Students are encouraged to develop their own internal restraints on behaviour (i.e. self-discipline). Being well-behaved is not merely a matter of obeying a set of rules but derives from a personal discernment of what is appropriate and Christ-like behaviour.
- o) Discipline is one of the means by which a student becomes like Jesus. It is a means of discipleship where, in the school setting, students are disciplined to use the skills and knowledge they are acquiring to be Christ's person, in Christ's place, under Christ's rule. Discipline redirects a student and addresses the future and not just the past. As we discipline students it must be a demonstration of God's grace.
- p) Both teachers and students are encouraged to consider the words of Paul: 'Whatever happens, conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the Gospel of Christ' (Philippians 1:27).

3. THE ROLE OF THE TEACHER: SERVING PARENTS, SERVING STUDENTS

3.1 Teacher Responsibility

The teacher has the responsibility, given by parents, to manage, lead and direct students.

- a) **A good working atmosphere** in the classroom is the result of a partnership between teachers and students. It is based on a shared commitment to learning. **Teachers should exercise leadership** in a pastoral way to inspire and maintain this commitment and students should respond respectfully to the teacher's leadership.
- b) **Love your students!** Pray for them. Take an interest in them. Take any opportunities on offer to spend time with them out of class. Don't use sarcasm or abuse as weapons. Be firm, fair, have high expectations, share your hopes and dreams for them as people and students with them. Punishments should never be harsh or demeaning. When it is necessary, punishment should be administered in a spirit of love and concern for the student and for his/her growth and obedience to the Lord.
- c) Teachers, in their relationships and dealings with each other and students, should reflect standards that are consistent with those expected of students. For example:
 - i. teachers and students need to be prompt and punctual;



- ii. teachers' dress should be professional – mirroring expectations of student uniform.
- d) Remember, nearly all students will be as **respectful** as you expect them to be. Nearly all students will be as **obedient** as you expect them to be.
- e) Students will either live **up** to your expectations or will live **down** to them.
- f) **Correction and consequences** should always be **restorative**. It should be **consistent** with the College's educational task (directed towards the enhancement and protection of the students' learning environment) and **appropriate** to the nature of the offence, if possible restoring damage to relationships or property.
- g) When being corrected, students should be encouraged, but not pressured to seek forgiveness, apologise and make **restitution** where appropriate in order to restore relationships.
- h) Teachers, particularly in situations where student conduct has caused them anger or frustration, are expected to **avoid the use of sarcasm** or personal ridicule. We must focus on the action (sin) whilst still treating the child with respect.
- i) **Teachers' communication** to students should be explicit, clear and respectful.
- j) **Records** need to be kept of all major disciplinary actions taken. This may be done in the Pastoral Care section in SEQTA where appropriate.
- k) **Show your love in your teaching** as the window that opens to God's creation and the students will love learning too. The basis of the "management" of our students is a relationship based on mutual respect and an enthusiasm for, and commitment to the learning task.

3.2 Expectations of Student Behaviour and Learning

- a) Teachers should **show high expectations of both student behaviour and learning**, checking bookwork and homework regularly and encouraging students to develop, use and share the talents that the Lord has given them.
- b) **Encourage a cooperative learning environment** where students share their talents and assist each other. Learning about the Lord and His world, in the classroom, is not a competition.
- c) **Establish expectations and rituals** (ways of doing things). We must be consistent with our expectations and with the consequences for students who fail to meet them. (Clearly however, we will also be sensitive to the exceptional student with special needs, e.g. ADHD child).



- d) **Do not turn a 'blind eye'** to any unacceptable behaviour, attitude, manner or body language.
- e) **Do not get into an argument with a student.** Instruct them politely but firmly and expect obedience. (A student may be invited to discuss a matter later, privately, but do not tolerate defiance).
- f) **Our task is to teach,** encourage and enable students to do what is right (and hopefully for the right motives).
- g) **Prayer** with the student or parents may be appropriate.
- h) **Doing something of value is not to be used as a punishment.** The punishment should fit the crime, therefore writing lines and picking up rubbish (unless the student has littered) are not appropriate consequences for misbehaviour.
- i) **The College has a duty of care towards all students.** This extends to a responsibility to protect students from harm or threat of harm, loss of property or educational disadvantage. For this reason, offending students may be withdrawn from particular school activities or from the school altogether, until the school is confident that other students, staff, the learning environment and property are safe.
- j) The College will seek to **inform and actively involve parents** if a student's misconduct is repeated or serious. Parents may be encouraged to participate in some form of out of school counselling for their child or the whole family. This may become a pre-requisite for staying at Rehoboth.
- k) **Encourage your students and their parents.** Feedback to students and their parents is an invaluable source of encouragement and relationship-building between teachers and families. Take every opportunity to inform students and parents about progress made with regard to school work, behaviour, personal development or contributions to some aspect of school life.

3.3 The Encouragement of Christ-Like Behaviour

- a) **Instruction:** Teachers must instruct students in their expectations as they set clear achievable goals. Teach children what is acceptable and train them to be 'wise' (as opposed to 'right') in their decision-making. Seek to convey to students that to be Christ-like is to follow the person of Jesus not just keeping rules and commandments.
- b) **A good model:** It is recognised that children mimic their teacher's behaviour, attitudes, dress and various other characteristics. At Rehoboth each teacher in the school is seeking to be a good model of the Lord Jesus to the students. It is important for the teacher to be a person who is seeking to do that which he or



she is encouraging the students to do, i.e. leading by example and service. Obviously our relationships with students become very important:

- i. be respectful
 - ii. be understanding
 - iii. be encouraging
 - iv. be creative
- c) **Motivation:** Doing the right thing; helping others; being well-behaved; working hard; achieving – these things provide great personal satisfaction. Encourage them to be like Jesus; to discover that the reward for being like Jesus is just that – being like Jesus! At Rehoboth, teachers realise the importance of “building up” the children. The children are led to base their self-esteem in the Gospel i.e. “I am not important or lovable because I can or I am, but rather because God has...”
- d) **Reinforcement:** Recognise, acknowledge and encourage positive student behaviour. The class teacher needs to devise agreed systems with the students that will meet and encourage these behaviours.

3.4 The Discouragement of Un-Christ-Like Behaviour

- a) **Realism:** Teachers will seek to maintain a realistic view of the individuals in their classes by setting goals that are achievable, giving clear instructions, making the classroom a pleasant place with lots of interesting tasks to be completed and by addressing themselves to the causes of children’s behaviour that lie outside of the child eg, physical, administrative, home etc. Explain why, how, and for what you will be disciplining the students. Train them in accepting punishment. Work toward the child seeing that the sin is the punishment. Choosing to pursue alternatives contrary to God’s ways are never the best for a person.
- b) **Reprimand:** Teachers at Rehoboth are not surprised when their students sin and seek to ensure that the children know exactly what they have done. At all times this is done with humility.
- c) **Retribution:** Accepting that not all misbehaviours should be retributive for all children, the teachers will seek to make the retribution when administered a ministry to the child as well as a deterrent and a correction. The purpose in doing this is so that the child can:
- i. understand how God detests sin
 - ii. recognise the need for Jesus to have died
 - iii. appreciate his own predicament of deserving eternal punishment
 - iv. repent and be restored in his relationship with God, people and creation.
- d) Punishment must fit the offence and the offender, hence you need not necessarily be consistent.



- e) **Repentance:** Teachers will encourage repentance but will not insist upon it. The suggestion will be made that a child apologises. It is acknowledged that a false sincerity is not desirable.
- f) **Restitution:** Following serious misdemeanours, teachers will encourage the students to make amends by redoing the job properly, returning the stolen items or creatively restoring the relationship with an offended person etc.
- g) **Restoration:** The children will be encouraged to see that the relationship with the teacher is never in jeopardy. The teacher will seek to reflect grace in his dealings with children. The teachers must be forgiving, loving as they have been loved (unconditionally). The teacher will assist the child as he/she seeks to solve the problem, outlining a way ahead, how to cope with a particular area of behaviour or how to improve etc. The teacher must provide feedback concerning the progress the student is making.
- h) **Rest:** As teachers recognise that God works out His purposes as He wishes, and that young children are somewhat “incomprehensible”, they will find their comfort in the fact that God is indeed the sovereign ruler of creation. They will also lead the children into embracing this fact.
- i) **Self-discipline:** Teachers will court their students with Christ-likeness. They will seek to make the child want to do what will need to be insisted upon anyway.

4. THE ROLE OF THE STUDENT: SERVING ONE ANOTHER

- a) It is our goal at Rehoboth to provide students with a range of opportunities to serve the Lord. We encourage each other to serve the Lord by serving others. The development of leadership skills is encouraged through such avenues of service as the Buddy system, and classroom responsibilities.
- b) As senior students in the school, Year 6 students are to see themselves as having a leadership role, setting an example of attitude and behaviour to the whole school community and taking on opportunities to develop and use their gifts as opportunities allow.
- c) A Christian school community is characterised, through God’s grace, by the quality of relationships. We serve the Lord by serving others.

4.1 Student Learning

- a) Attending school is a privilege that many children and young people around the world do not share. Learning about God’s world and the life He wants us to live in it is also a great privilege we have at Rehoboth. Every student benefits from a positive and orderly learning environment, and each student at



Rehoboth has the responsibility to learn and to ensure that the learning of other students is enhanced and not impeded by misbehaviour.

- b) To contribute to a safe and positive learning environment:
- i. students are to come to class prepared for all lessons. This includes all stationery, books, instruments, uniforms, diary, notes and other items as required;
 - ii. be on time for all lessons;
 - iii. Year 1-6 students should:
 - line up quietly and promptly after the bell;
 - enter the classroom in an orderly manner on the teacher's instructions;
 - iv. students need to remain in the classroom and move around the room as the teacher directs;
 - v. students need to listen when the class teacher and others are speaking. In discussions, only one person should speak at a time;
 - vi. all work should be presented neatly and according to the teachers' instructions;
 - vii. homework should be completed by the due date;
 - viii. as students develop, they should progressively take more and more responsibility for their own learning. Asking questions, making good use of Library resources, doing homework and revision regularly are important features of a mature approach to study and learning.

4.2 Keeping Safe

- a) Every student at Rehoboth has the right to feel safe and to be safe.
- b) To ensure that students are safe:
- i. any activity, which is likely to hurt others, such as throwing things, fighting, pushing or any form of physical abuse, is not allowed;
 - ii. behaviour that is likely to hurt or upset others, (including name calling, teasing, gossiping, threatening, spitting, swearing or deliberate exclusion) is not allowed;
 - iii. implements that can be used to harm others should not be brought to school;
 - iv. students are to stay within the school grounds at all times;
 - v. students must walk on concrete areas and pathways;
 - vi. non-contact is the general rule in all sports;
 - vii. students who travel on buses before and after school should do so in a quiet and orderly fashion. This includes both travelling to and from school and on school excursions;
 - viii. items of personal property such as mobile phones, music listening devices, and electronic games may only be used with permission of teachers. Expensive toys and large amounts of money should not be brought to school.



4.3 Show Respect and Earn Respect

- a) Each person in the College community is an image bearer of God. Each of us then should treat others with respect and be treated with respect at all times.
- b) A very important lesson for students to learn is to show respect for people in authority, eg, parents and teachers. Teachers should model respect at school by the way they treat students – with self-control and courtesy – at all times guarding students' integrity.
- c) Learning to get on with others in a respectful and courteous manner is a sign of a person who cares about other people and not just about himself/herself; it is a sign of maturity. It is putting into practice what the Bible says: 'Look not only to your own interest, but also to the interests of others' (Philippians 2:4).
- d) To be a mature member of our College community:
 - i. always follow instructions from a staff member;
 - ii. make frequent use of words such as 'Thank you', 'Please', 'Excuse me' etc;
 - iii. be honest; tell the truth;
 - iv. stand aside for members of staff, parents and visitors on pathways and when passing through doorways;
 - v. greet members of staff when meeting or passing;
 - vi. older students should take responsibility for the needs of younger children – at school and to and from school;
 - vii. when visiting another classroom (e.g. as a messenger) knock, enter and wait for the teacher's attention. When the teacher acknowledges you, say 'Excuse me, [teacher's name]' and deliver your message;
 - viii. be courteous when approached by members of the public;
 - ix. treat others in the same way that you would like to be treated;
 - x. do not answer back or argue when spoken to – if you ever feel that a teacher has not treated you fairly do not argue or be rude; instead, do what you are told **but** make sure that you speak to the teacher at an appropriate time later, in private, and explain your concerns;
 - xi. if you are still unhappy with the situation, you may wish to seek the help of a third party e.g. a trusted member of staff to talk to the teacher again with you.

4.4 School Grounds

- a) The Lord has provided us with a lovely school environment. Take care of it.
- b) To care for our campus grounds:



- i. all rubbish must be placed in bins provided – food is not to be taken into sandpits;
- ii. students are not to bring chewing gum or bubble gum to school;
- iii. all trees, plants, and shrubs are to be protected – students are not to climb in or on them, break branches, graffiti trunks, or dig around their roots;
- iv. students are to walk on the concrete and paved areas of the school.

4.5 Uniforms

School uniform should be worn (at school and also to and from school) unless otherwise directed by a teacher. See the uniform handbooks and uniform policy available on SEQTA for more information.

5. DISCIPLINE PROCEDURES

5.1 Classroom Behaviour

- a) The class teacher will deal with most classroom discipline issues. This may include apology, restitution, time-out in a designated place in the classroom, changed seating arrangements, suspension from special activities. Rather than placing a child outside the classroom for any length of time he/she should be sent to a pre-organised buddy teacher with work to complete if possible.
- b) Ongoing behaviour problems may necessitate the teacher keeping an ongoing record of student behaviour. A negotiated contract may be required. Parents and the Principal or their delegate will be involved at this point.

5.2 Serious or Severe Behaviour

- a) All serious offences will be referred to the Principal. In some cases parents will be notified by letter. Students may also need to make restitution, apologise or repair damage to property.
- b) Serious offences will include:
 - i. continued disruptive behaviour in class (talking, calling out, out of seat, annoying other);
 - ii. violence of any nature;
 - iii. inappropriate language;
 - iv. bullying;
 - v. insolence-blattant disrespect or disobedience to a teacher or visitor;
 - vi. stealing;
 - vii. temper tantrums.



- c) When establishing the seriousness of an action, consideration should be given to:
 - i. the student's background;
 - ii. personality;
 - iii. maturity level;
 - iv. intent of the action;
 - v. possible cries for help;
 - vi. previous problems in the same or similar areas;
 - vii. the child's inability to understand normal social or behavioural conventions.
- d) Disobedience, deception and deliberate actions will be viewed seriously.
- e) Repeated offences will result in an interview with parents.
- f) Ongoing inappropriate behaviour may result in the student being suspended from school activities for a period of time. This will be in consultation with the Principal and parents and may involve being withdrawn from classroom or certain activities remaining at school in the care of the Principal or at home.
- g) Where a student shows no repentance, willingness to change or acceptance of wrongdoing after serious intervention from all appropriate school personnel the student's parents may be requested to withdraw their child from the school or be expelled. This will be done in consultation with the Principal.

5.3 Consequences of Responsible Behaviour

- a) **Positive Recognition:** It is essential that students who display responsible behaviour are acknowledged. This recognition will be through:
 - i. classroom certificates;
 - ii. merit certificates;
 - iii. incentives and/or House tokens;
 - iv. notes of commendation in the student diary or on SEQTA;
 - v. verbal acknowledgement;
 - vi. meeting with the Principal.

6. WHOLE-COLLEGE BEHAVIOUR PROCEDURE

6.1 Classroom Teacher

- a) Deals with classroom day-to-day issues.



- b) May notify parents of positive student behaviour by phone or letter or through SEQTA.
- c) Keeps documentation of all action including anecdotal notes.
- d) Discipline procedures may include apology, restitution, think sheet, time out, seating changes, suspension from special activities, pre-organised buddy teacher class, and other teacher-initiated consequences.
- e) Implements behaviour programs to enforce positive behaviours (e.g. Stop, Think, Do).
- f) May notify parents of student concerns by phone, email or message through SEQTA and may invite parents to an interview.
- g) Implements Individual Behaviour Plans with student input and parent notification.
- h) Refers significant discipline or pastoral care issues to the Principal.
- i) May be involved with Principal in interviews with parents.

6.2 Principal

Where students display persistent or severe misbehaviour the following procedure will apply:

- a) Teacher discussion and documentation reviewed.
- b) Withdrawn from class for certain activities.
- c) Meeting with parents.
- d) Be given in-school suspension on one occasion.
- e) Ongoing consultation with parents and outside agencies will continue towards a positive outcome.
- f) If unacceptable behaviour continues, the Principal may give up to two home suspensions.
- g) Interviews with Parents will be conducted at each stage of this process.
- h) A letter of warning will be sent to the parents if the student is likely to be excluded from the College.
- i) Withdrawal of student from school or be excluded.



- j) Suspicions of child abuse should be reported directly to the Principal; a Mandatory Report must also be made if this is of a sexual nature.
- k) Each case will be dealt with individually due to various circumstances which may need to be considered.
- l) At all times, partnership with the parents is encouraged for the benefit of the student.

7. DISCIPLINE POLICY

- a) The principle underpinning the College's Discipline (Students) Policy is that the student receives a warning prior to a consequence and there is an escalating series of consequences if the student's behaviour does not improve.
- b) 'Discipline' at Rehoboth may sometimes include the concept of punishment but must be seen as being much broader than simply punishment for wrongdoing. In its fundamental meaning, discipline in the school refers to the idea of 'disciplining' the students, encouraging and leading them into conformity to the person of Christ. As such it should include many aspects, including praise, encouragement, teaching, nurturing, example and correction. The 'other side of the coin' includes chastisement, retribution, punishment and restitution, as well as aspects of justice, graciousness, repentance, forgiveness and reconciliation.
- c) In the event of a serious breach of conduct, the consequences may be escalated more quickly. If parents would like their child to be readmitted after exclusion, they will need to have a meeting with the Principal at the end of the time of suspension to discuss this. Sometimes a student may only be readmitted on a 'conditional enrolment basis' with various conditions being documented and requiring the student and parent to sign the document (or contract) to indicate that they are aware that continued enrolment is subject to the stated conditions being met.
- d) In certain cases, a student may be excluded from attending the College. A student can only be excluded from the College if the Board (or its representative members) agrees to a recommendation from the Principal that such an action is necessary. This occurs after a review of the circumstances by a Discipline Panel. Suspension and exclusion are very rare occurrences in this College, but parents need to be aware of the policies that apply. Parents who would like to discuss these matters should contact the Principal.