



THE NELSON THOMLINSON SCHOOL
BEHAVIOUR POLICY

Signed by Headmaster:

Signed by Chair of Governors:

Reviewed by Behaviour, Safeguarding and Wellbeing Committee:

19 November 2020

Next review:

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NELSON THOMLINSON SCHOOL DISCIPLINARY/EXCLUSION POLICY.

Our disciplinary procedure is not something which is separate from the mainstream of our existence, a different way of dealing with people which comes into action when normal methods fail: our disciplinary policy flows naturally from our basic aims and philosophy. The pillars on which this school stands are respect for the needs of individuals and for those of the community. In disciplinary matters, as in all other areas of school life, we seek to serve those needs – and to do so in ways which are appropriate to a school. This means we must at all times be both rational and humane.

Underlying philosophy.

The needs of the individual

A concern to promote appropriate behaviour and to modify inappropriate behaviour is at the heart of the school. We should of course, see it as natural that young people will from time to time, misbehave: what we must never do is to see them as being incapable of improvement. We owe it to our pupils to have high expectations of them and it is ultimately to be contemptuous of young people for us not to be prepared to make demands on them. Furthermore, a demand is not a demand unless we are prepared to enforce it by appropriate means. What constitutes appropriateness depends both on the nature of the offence and the situation of the offender.

Some pupils with behavioural problems, for example, should be regarded as having a type of special educational need; it is, therefore, neither rationally, nor morally justifiable to treat them in the same way as those whose misdemeanours are merely casual. This is not a matter of double standards: it is simply a working-out of our general principle of responding to individual needs.

Nor is this approach to the disadvantage of the “law-abiding” majority: learning how to deal appropriately with transgressors is an important “real life” lesson for us all – pupils as well as teachers – but it must be understood that the educational rights (within this school) of any individual are not absolute. We are not for example, equipped to respond – long-term – on a one-to-one basis to the needs of any pupil: there is a practical limit to the amount of time any school can spend on trying to persuade any individual to comply with its rules. There is also the question of hierarchy of needs: in stark terms, the rights of the bullied will usually take precedence over those of the bully.

The needs of the community

A community shows its values not by talking but by acting – and unless it is prepared to act in their defence it cannot expect its values to be taken seriously. By responding sympathetically to the needs of individuals, and by striving to make its goals and attitudes relevant to those who do not readily perceive their relevance, a school improves the service it gives to all its pupils. However, to accommodate those who actively reject its values – for whatever reason – is to undermine those values and thereby to damage its service to other pupils. There is a point at which concern for the many outweighs concern for the needs of any one individual. Conditions for Learning (C4L) are an expectation in all of our classrooms. A sense of decency is expected in and around school at all times.

Appropriate means

By far the best way of promoting appropriate behaviour is by having an atmosphere in school which encourages pupils to feel valued. This enhances their self-respect and their level of commitment to the school. We should always remember that expressions of approval are, ultimately, more important than expressions of disapproval: praising – in class and out of it – reinforces the community's values not only to the pupils who is praised but also to anyone else who is within earshot. This reinforcement can become even more potent when it is delivered formally and publicly in assemblies and at Prize Day.

Rewards

House Points (HPs) will be awarded to pupils for a range of achievements from academic, attendance, excellent AtL grades, and charitable works and also for displaying the attributes of NTS-ness we are so proud of. House activity periods are scheduled in the School Calendar and HPs will be awarded for participation in the events in addition to those for the overall winners. Before Year 11 and 13 are due to leave, we will hold a celebration for the winning House and re-set the totals back to zero for the latter half of the summer term.

In attempting to modify inappropriate behaviour we should pay due regard to all three of the classical theories of punishment: obviously. Reform must be our first concern when dealing with errant individuals; but we owe it to the community to ensure that our actions are also act as a deterrent to those on the verge of misbehaviour. Retribution will normally be a less prominent motive, but there must be times when the need to assert the community's values in uncompromising terms is of paramount importance.

Sanctions

It is a sign of our respect for our pupils and our ambition for them that we have high expectations with regard to their behaviour. Our pupils respond to this by behaving well, and for the great majority of them, punishment is a very rare occurrence. Where it does happen, sanctions range (in the case of minor cases of misbehaviour) from being told off to being subject to a degree of personal inconvenience (lines, detentions, etc).

Around school, all members of staff (and prefects) are responsible for the maintenance of good order. Where misbehaviour occurs in class, it is the class teacher who is responsible for punishment, but, in the case of more serious or repeated incidents, the pupil will be referred to the relevant Head of Department, who may escalate the punishment or involve the pupil's Head of Year. At this level, parents will certainly be contacted if this has not happened already. More serious punishments, which may now be used include after-school detentions, pastoral report, removal from lessons into the Internal Exclusion Room (IER) or a Fixed Term Exclusion. In addition to the IER being used as a sanction, it is a supervised room where pupils study in isolation whilst incidents are investigated by pastoral staff. Pupils can work in individual booths, at a computer or at a desk accessing work which directly relates to the lesson they are missing. The decision to exclude a pupil will be taken in the following circumstances: -

- In response to a serious breach of the School's Discipline Policy;
- If allowing the pupil to remain in School would seriously harm the education or welfare of the pupil or others in the School.

Exclusion is an extreme sanction and is only administered by the Headteacher.

General factors the School considers before making a decision to exclude

Exclusion will be imposed whereby it is a proportionate response to the actions of a pupil. Before deciding whether to exclude a pupil either permanently or for a fixed period the Head will:

- Ensure appropriate investigations have been carried out.
- Allow the pupils to give her/his version of events.
- Verify how the incident has been provoked (if appropriate).

If the Head is satisfied that on the balance of probabilities the pupil did what he or she is alleged to have done, exclusion will be the outcome.

If a pupil's behaviour is starting to present a serious worry the pastoral staff will work with the pupils and parents to bring about change and a written individual action plan (ISP) will be drawn up for that pupil in order to try to attack the roots of the misbehaviour. At this stage outside agencies may be involved. Should behaviours merit it, a Behaviour Management Plan will be drawn up to ensure safe-guarding that pupil within clear parameters.

It is the school's policy to do whatever it reasonably can to avoid permanent exclusion. We will always explore every possible alternative available to us – provided we can do so without undue threat or damage to the needs of others in our community.

Governors are usually informed and involved before matters reach crisis-point. (It is demoralising for teachers when, having been pushed beyond the limits of their endurance governors then require them to give an uncontrollable pupil one more "last chance" – but it is equally unsatisfactory for governors to be cast in a role which allows them only to serve as "executioners".)

Except in the most extraordinarily serious cases, then, permanent exclusion will only occur when all other reasonable strategies have failed. It is sought when we can no longer control a pupil –not usually for a particular level of offence. It is, for example, difficult to imagine a more serious offence than violence to a teacher, but, provided there was a genuine contrition, suitable punishment and no reasonable likelihood of recurrence, it would not, in itself, constitute sufficient grounds for expulsion: a seemingly endless succession of much less serious offences would do so.

Permanent Exclusion

The decision to exclude a pupil permanently is a serious one. There are two main types of situation in which permanent exclusion may be considered.

The first is a final, formal step in a concerted process for dealing with disciplinary offences following the use of wide range of other strategies, which have been used without success. It is an acknowledgement that all available strategies have been exhausted and is used as a last resort. This would include persistent and defiant misbehaviour including bullying (which would include racist or homophobic bullying) or repeated possession and or use of an illegal drug on school premises.

The second is where there are exceptional circumstances and it is not appropriate to implement other strategies and where it could be appropriate to permanently exclude a pupil for a first or 'one off' offence.

Behaviour Outside School

Pupils' behaviour outside school in the community or on school "business" for example school trips and journeys, away school sports fixtures or a work experience placement is subject to the school's Disciplinary Policy. Bad behaviour in these circumstances will be dealt with as if it had taken place in School. For behaviour outside School but not on school business this policy will still have effect if there is a clear link between that behaviour and maintaining good behaviour and discipline among the pupil body as a whole. If pupils' behaviour in the immediate vicinity of the School or on a journey to and from school is poor and meets the School criteria for exclusion then the Head may decide to exclude.

Drug Related Exclusions

In making a decision on whether or not to exclude for a drug-related offence the Headmaster will have regard to the School's published policy on drugs. The decision will depend on the precise circumstances of the case and the evidence available. In some cases fixed term exclusion will be more appropriate than permanent exclusion. The Head will make a judgement set against the criteria in the school's Drugs Policy.

Behaviour of parents and other visitors to the school

Pupils benefit when the relationship between home and school is a positive one. The vast majority of parents and others visiting Nelson Thomlinson School are very supportive. However, on the rare occasions when threatening behaviour and abuse against school staff or other members of the school community is witnessed, it will not be tolerated. When formulating our procedures, reference was made to the DfE publication 'A Legal toolkit for schools - Tackling abuses, threats and violence towards members of the school community' and the DfE publication 'Advice on School Security; Access and barring of individuals from school premises' (December 2012).

Nelson Thomlinson School expects staff to behave professionally in these difficult situations and to attempt to defuse the situation, where possible, seeking the involvement of a member of SMT. However, all members of the school community (including other parents and visitors) have the right to visit and work without fear of violence and abuse, and the right in an extreme case, of appropriate self-defence.

Types of behaviour that are considered unacceptable

It is an offence under section 547 of the Education Act 1997 for any person (including a parent) to cause a nuisance or disturbance on school premises.

The following outlines the type of behaviour that are considered unacceptable toward any member of the school community. **This is not an exhaustive list but seeks to provide illustrations of such behaviour:**

- Shouting, either in person or over the telephone
- Speaking in an aggressive threatening tone
- Physical intimidation e.g. standing very close
- The use of aggressive hand gestures/exaggerated movements
- Physical threats
- Shaking or holding a fist towards another person
- Swearing
- Pushing
- Hitting, eg slapping, punching or kicking
- Spitting
- Racist or sexist comments
- Sending inappropriate or abusive e-mails to staff or to the general school e-mail address.
- Publishing or posting derogatory or inappropriate comments which relate to the school, its pupils or staff volunteers on a social networking site
- Breaking the school's security procedures

If a parent or member of the public behaves in an unacceptable way during a telephone conversation staff have the right to terminate the call. The incident must be reported to a member of SMT. The school reserves the right to take any necessary action to ensure that members of the school community are not subjected to verbal abuse. The school may warn the aggressor, ban them from the school, and/or contact the police.

Behaving in an unacceptable way towards a member of staff includes instances of gross exaggeration, defamation of character, harassment, unsubstantiated allegations and general rudeness, especially if such acts are repeated or sustained, and may ultimately lead to legal/police involvement and prosecution.

If a parent/visitor behaves in an unacceptable way in person towards a member of the school staff a member of SMT will seek to resolve the situation through discussion and mediation. If necessary, the schools' complaints procedure will be followed.

When all procedures have been exhausted, and aggression or intimidation continues, or where there is an act of violence, the discussion will be terminated and the parent/visitor will be instructed to leave the school premises immediately and the police may be contacted.

The perpetrator of any unacceptable behaviour directed at a member of the school community may be banned from school premises for a period of time, which will be determined by the school. Prior to a ban being imposed, the following steps will be taken:

- Depending on the severity of the incident, the parent/visitor may first be issued with a written warning stating that if a similar incident occurs, the individual concerned will be banned from the school premises.
- In more serious cases, the parent/visitor will be informed, in writing, that they are banned from the premises temporarily, subject to review, and what will happen if the ban is breached.
- Extreme incidents will result in a permanent ban being enforced. The individual will be informed in writing of the permanent ban but will be given the right to appeal in writing against the decision.
- In all cases, parents will still have the opportunity to discuss any issues relating to their child with school staff.
- Incidents of verbal or physical abuse towards staff or pupils will result in the police being informed, and may result in prosecution.