

Discipline Policy

A positive learning environment is an essential element for children to experience school success. Without discipline, there is a compromised climate for learning that can eventually resemble chaos and present safety hazards. All children have the potential to learn to behave appropriately at school and benefit from a discipline system that comprises potential for student progress through consistent recognition of positive behavior and deterrence of negative behavior. Research shows that the most effective discipline systems use proactive strategies to prevent discipline problems. Before consequences are given, students must first be supported in learning the skills necessary to enhance a positive school climate and avoid negative behavior. In the event of misconduct, it is essential to the student's future that consequences are appropriate and sequential.

Parents, teachers, and students need to work together to ensure a safe and productive environment at school. Parents and teachers attempt to guide the student and help him/her to understand the expectations of the school and to work towards them. They also help the student to accept the responsibility and the consequences of his/her actions; a necessary prerequisite for behavior modification.

To encourage a consistent, firm, and fair culture that affirms positive behavior, GBS adopts a discipline policy that includes the rights and responsibilities of students, a student code of conduct, intervention for specific disruptive behaviors, and appropriate consequences. The GBS discipline policy can be summarized as follows:

1. All members of the school community have the right to a safe school environment: unsafe behavior anywhere around the campus or on the school buses will not be tolerated.
2. All members of the school community have the right to respect. The GBS Guiding Statements upholds the values of tolerance and respect of others.
3. All students have the right to learn: any behavior causing the disruption of the learning process is inappropriate and will not be tolerated.
4. Integrity, honesty, and respect of others' property are values that support self and mutual respect. Cheating, lying, forging signatures, stealing, violating data privacy and vandalism, and cyberbullying are all serious offenses that will result in corrective measures.
5. Punishment should fit the offense; it is the behavior that is targeted, not the person.
6. All adults in the school must be role models for responsible behavior and self-control.

A. Encouraged and Expected Student Behavior

All GBS students are required to adopt the following:

1. Believe that they can and will learn.
2. Attend school daily, on time, and actively participate in all classes.
3. Produce quality work that meets the highest classroom standards.
4. Come prepared to class: bring all necessary materials, including homework, completed assignments, and signed letters and complete required reading and study.
5. Know and follow all school and class rules.

6. Respect themselves, the school, classmates, staff, family, and the community.
7. Use appropriate language at all times when communicating with others.
8. Avoid negative peer pressure and activities.
9. Regularly communicate with parents and teachers about their progress in school.
10. Embrace and model the traits of a digital citizen.
11. Model the behavior of a global citizen.

B. List of Unproductive and Inappropriate Behavior

Unproductive behavior is defined as any behavior that interferes with the student's own or another student's academic progress and/or well-being. The following list identifies behaviors considered unproductive and inappropriate, thus requiring corrective measures:

1. Disrespect to Others:
 - a. Acting inappropriately toward or causing another student or adult to physically, emotionally or socially be hurt;
 - b. Failure to follow directions: disrupting class, disorderly behavior in the hallway or the playground;
 - c. Being tardy, unprepared for class, missing assignment deadlines, leaving the classroom without permission;
 - d. Failure to comply with the GBS dress code (including hair length).
2. Inappropriate Language/Words: (Teasing, swearing, name calling, use of offensive language).
3. Damage/Theft: (Destroying notebooks/tests/school letters/devices; Damage made to or the theft of school or others' property; Littering or other untidy behavior).
4. Lying/Cheating/Plagiarism: Being untruthful when telling the facts of an incident, telling lies about others, hiding notes from parents or teachers, copying the work of others and claiming as your own, etc.
5. Breaching any of the terms listed in "GBS Technology Code of Ethics".
6. Physical Aggression: (Pushing, shoving, kicking, hitting, slapping, scratching, etc., or any physical contact with the intent to intimidate/harass).
7. Possession of Prohibited Items: Any item that might disrupt classes or represent a hazard to the health and safety of anyone is not allowed on school premises. Such items include but are not restricted to: laser pointers, fireworks, aerosol cans, trading cards, alarms, buzzers, electronic games, radios, mobile phones, skateboards, roller blades, knives, blades or any sharp/pointed objects, toy guns, mobile phones, make-up kits, magazines, cigarettes, reptiles, and insects. These items will be immediately confiscated by any adult in the school to be returned only to parents. Such items will be kept in the Principal's office until picked up by parents. Possession and/or use of unauthorized items that will endanger the safety of others will result in serious disciplinary action, including possible expulsion for serious cases. Mobile phones are allowed in HS only but with restrictions.

All these behaviors are handled initially by the teacher; however, the intensity, the severity or of the incident may warrant the intervention of the Vice Principal and/or the Principal. Requesting administrative intervention for every incident undermines the teacher's effective classroom management and encourages further infractions.

C. Role of the Teacher

Teachers have the right to teach and the right to expect students to behave. They must establish classroom rules and routines that provide for optimal learning. He/she must determine appropriate behavior that is conducive to learning, request the students to adopt such behavior, and encourage them to help create and maintain a positive social and educational environment. Successful teachers clearly and firmly communicate their expectations to their students, and are prepared to reinforce their words with appropriate actions. Students clearly know the parameters of acceptable and unacceptable behavior. Students learn to trust and respect their teacher, because they know he/she is “fair” and consistent. Research has shown that a non-threatening learning environment with clear expectations develops a sense of belonging among students, makes them self-initiated and self-confident, and thus increases their desire for learning. Teachers who “care” are considered to be among the most important environmental factors that can help learners to develop positive attitudes towards learning and promote students’ effort or engagement in learning tasks. Conversely, if teachers act coercively by adopting punitive discipline strategies, learning is negatively affected and more psychological and somatic complaints are heard in the classroom.

Teachers should:

- Accept responsibility for maintaining discipline and order within the classroom and throughout the school.
- Adhere to the spirit of the School’s Guiding Statements.
- Implement the GBS discipline policy and procedures.
- Implement class, and school rules and regulations in an assertive, consistent, and prompt manner.
- Use a preventive strategy through proper organization and communication of clear expectations.
- Include character education, Global Citizenship traits/aspects, and life skills in the regular instructional program.
- Respond to learners in a caring and respectful manner.
- Display impartial behavior to all students, especially in the use of rewards and punishment.
- Keep accurate misdemeanor records and promptly inform the division administration of more serious discipline problems.
- Elicit support from parents in the implementation of disciplinary strategies by keeping them informed.
- Model and spotlight desirable/acceptable social and productive behaviors.

D. Role of the School Counselor

The Counselor helps parents, teachers, and students establish and promote a positive learning environment. She/he plays a proactive role in relation to disciplinary issues that has a preventive aspect as well as crisis counseling. The Counselor’s main task is to help students balance the demands of school, family and friends by providing personal, social, educational and developmental counseling for individuals and groups. The School Counselor works with students on:

- Finding ways to get along with one another.
- Dealing with problems outside the classroom, in school and at home.
- Character development and looking for new and creative ways to keep practicing good

citizenship at school and beyond.

As part of preventive strategies, the SC conducts 'Life Skills' classes on different topics such as anger management, good study skills and respect. The SC meets with students alone or in small groups during break times to discuss positive behavior; She/he provides teachers and parents with suggestions and handouts to use with difficult students in the classroom or at home; she also leads students in various community-based service projects.

When a child has a more challenging, complex psychological or behavioral issue that requires outside services, the SC can provide the parents with a list of professional places in Kuwait that may prove helpful, including confidential testing/evaluation and treatment sites.

E. The Conduct Sheet

Teachers may keep a conduct sheet to register violations for students whose behavior needs consistent monitoring. This sheet is conceived as a self-monitoring tool that allows the student to identify his/her own inappropriate behavior and acknowledge the consequence of such behavior. It is used as a warning that the student needs to abstain from further inappropriate behavior to avoid more severe consequences. It also helps them to manage their own behavior and thus acquire self-discipline. This sheet helps the student and the parents to continuously monitor behavior and to engage in discussions on ways to improve. It helps teachers and the SC to identify recurrent behavior that requires a strategy for modification—and provides evidence of behavioral progress or lack thereof.

F. Disciplinary Sanctions

1. Behavior Awards

Rewards for good behavior can range from very simple to more complex. A word of praise, a sticker, a simple note to the parents via Skoolee merit program, points for the group, and special privileges like first in line or teacher helper can all be very effective instantaneous reinforcement for good behavior at the discretion of the teacher. These do not require intricate planning or expense.

Students who demonstrate exemplary behavior by maintaining a record clean of any behavioral reprimand or who make a marked improvement in behavior may receive certificates from the teacher at the end of the semester. Other rewards can be granted by the Principal, such as special free dress day or a food party.

2. Corrective Measures

In the case of minor misconduct, the teacher talks to the student to help him understand the inappropriateness of his actions. For serious offenses or the recurrence of misbehavior, the parents are informed through Skoolee demerit program. They will also be invited to share in the responsibility of intervention with the goal of behavioral modification.

Misbehavior will result in one or more of the following corrective measures:

1. Creation of Conduct Sheet for the student.
2. Detention with the teacher/Principal/Vice Principal.
3. Parent meeting with teacher and Principal.
4. Behavior Contract + Counseling.
5. Suspension.
6. Disciplinary probation.
7. Expulsion.

- **Serious or Repeated Offenses**

Serious misconduct or repeated minor offenses must be referred to the Vice Principal and/or the Principal. Examples of serious misconduct offenses are:

1. Disrespect and/or defiance to school staff.
2. Use of offensive language towards staff or students.
3. Fighting with or causing injury, however slight, to another student or staff member.
4. Damaging school property or the property of another.
5. Bullying in any of its forms.
6. Accumulation of 3 parental notices/demerits and a teacher-parent conference (one teacher).
7. Other offenses deemed of a serious nature.

- **Discipline measures for serious offenses**

Teachers will refer the student to the Vice Principal and/or the Principal with a detailed explanation, in writing, of the misconduct. The Principal/Vice principal will do the following:

1. Investigate the issue with the students, calling for eyewitnesses.
2. Call the parents for a meeting.
3. Issue a behavioral report to be signed by the parents then placed in the student's file.
4. Suspend the child for a period of time depending on the misconduct.

Role of the Parents:

When children have trouble in school, many parents feel disappointed and worried about what this means for their children's future. Some parents also feel angry with their child or feel guilty or think that others blame them for not instilling good conduct in their child. Others get angry with the school and try to blame the school, administration and teachers, for their child's lack of discipline.

Working with the school

When working with staff at your child's school, it may be helpful to:

1. Try not to take it as a criticism of you or your parenting methods, when they inform you that your child is misbehaving. Be calm and cooperative rather than angry.
2. Listen to the school's point of view. **Remember, children often leave bits out and bend the truth because they want to avoid getting into trouble!**

3. Avoid challenging school rules in front of your child. If you strongly disagree with any of the rules, discuss this with the appropriate Principal in a private meeting without having your child or another staff present.
4. Be realistic about what you expect from the administration, Counselor, or teachers.

Possible Reasons for Misbehavior

1. Discuss any possible reasons why your child might have developed behavior problems at school. This may explain your child's behavior and may convince the school to deal with the situation differently.
2. There may be problems that are happening outside school.
3. Check your child's engagement and interaction on social media. Check for cyber bullying or digital abuse.
4. Your child may have a health problem, be on medication, have hearing or vision problems.
5. If you think your child may be misbehaving for one of these reasons, talk to the school about having a diagnostic assessment by a child psychologist or developmental psychologist.
6. It may also be useful to ask the school about other resources such as special workshops for children with behavior difficulties, for children with learning difficulties, or for whatever you, and they, think the problem might be.
7. Discuss the possibility of an assessment by the School Counselor if you think your child may be misbehaving because of a problem with a teacher, and then speak to the Director.
8. If you are concerned that your child's behavior is being influenced by his/her friends (peer group) and that he/she is 'hanging out with the wrong crowd', ask the SC to talk to your child.
9. Remember, you do not have to always handle your child's misbehavior on your own. If you do not know how to handle the situation, speak to the School Counselor or seek outside professional help and advice.

Conclusion

A proactive approach to prevent discipline problems is the best policy. Parents and school must work together to help the child stay out of trouble at school. Teachers need to keep parents informed of their child's academic progress and behavior and to notify the SC of any changes in the student's behavior or academic progress. Timely behavior sanctions (awards and punishments) are very important in developing self-discipline. Teachers' cooperation and consistent implementation of the discipline policy and management strategies help the students to accept the consequences of their own actions and for them to make a conscious effort to conduct themselves in a school-approved, socially accepted manner.

The goal of the GBS Discipline Policy is to help students reach a heightened sense of awareness of what makes good citizens able to succeed in life. We hope, with the support of parents, that our Discipline Policy will help make our children independent, lifelong learners, and active participants in the development of their community.

A detailed list of possible consequences is shared with the students at school in an age appropriate language.