Progressive Discipline Policy

Preamble

In recognition that all people are created in the image and likeness of God and, as such, have the right to be treated with dignity, respect and fairness, St. Stephen‘s Progressive Discipline Policy has been developed to support a safe, inclusive, and accepting school climate in which every student can reach his or her full academic and spiritual potential.

Progressive Discipline Defined

Progressive discipline is part of a whole-school approach which involves all members of the school community in maintaining respectful relationships throughout the school community. Progressive discipline involves the use of a continuum of prevention programs, interventions, supports, and consequences that include learning opportunities for students in order to promote positive behaviour and healthy relationships.

When inappropriate behaviour occurs, our disciplinary measures will be applied within a framework that shifts the focus from one that is solely punitive to one that is both corrective and supportive.

Promoting and Supporting Positive Student Behaviour

St. Stephen provides a wide-range of supports to encourage positive student behaviour and healthy relationships, including:

- Class placement
- Differentiated instruction
- Program modifications and/or classroom accommodations
- Encouragement and positive reinforcement
- Character formation focused on the gospel values and Catholic Graduate Expectations
- Individual, peer and group counseling
- Conflict resolution
- Mentorship programs
- Anti-bullying and violence prevention programs
- Sensitivity programs
- Student success strategies
- School, Board and community support programs

The school also provides the following student engagement and leadership initiatives in order to foster a positive school climate, but are not limited to:

- Student clubs
- Intramural and Interscholastic sports
- Peer Helpers
- Ambassadors
- Social Justice Club

Responding to Student Misbehaviour

St. Stephen is committed to addressing inappropriate student behaviour, including bullying and harassment, with a range of measures that are both corrective and supportive and that are progressively more serious **for repeated misbehaviour.**

The range of interventions, supports and consequences are developmentally appropriate and provide opportunities for the student to focus on improving his/her behaviour.

In some circumstances, short-term suspension may be an appropriate response. In the case of a serious incident, long-term suspension or expulsion, which is further along the continuum of progressive discipline, may be the response that is required.

Mitigating & Other Factors

Disciplinary action and consequences will reflect consideration of mitigating and other factors that are specific to the student involved in the misbehaviour.

Mitigating Factors:

- The student does not have the ability to control his or her behaviour;
- The student does not have the ability to understand the foreseeable consequences of his or her behaviour;
- The student's continuing presence in the school does not create an unacceptable risk to the safety of any person.

Other Factors:

- The student's academic, discipline and personal history;
- Whether a progressive discipline approach has been attempted with the student, and if so, the progressive discipline approach(es) that has/have been attempted and any success or failure;
- Whether the activity for which the student may be or is being suspended or expelled was related to any harassment of the student because of his or her race, ethnic origin, religion, disability, gender or sexual orientation or harassment for any other reason;
- How the suspension or expulsion would affect the student's ongoing education;
- The age of the student.

For students with special education needs, interventions, supports, and consequences must be consistent with the student's strengths, needs, goals, and expectations contained in his or her Individual Education Plan (IEP).

In consideration of a suspension or expulsion, the following other factors shall be taken into account for students who have an Individual Education Plan:

- Whether the behaviour was a manifestation of the pupil's exceptionality;
- Whether appropriate individualized accommodation has been provided;
- Whether the suspension or expulsion is likely to result in an aggravation or worsening of the pupil's behaviour or conduct.

It should be noted that *mitigating* may mean the shortening of duration of a suspension; it does not necessarily mean that a suspension is not used as a corrective measure.

The Continuum of Interventions

The continuum of interventions in our progressive discipline model begins at the classroom level, between the teacher and the student, and then includes additional resources and partners, including parents/guardians

Classroom Interventions:

- Teacher-student meeting
- Verbal reminders
- Written reflective assignment
- Time out/quiet area to work
- Teacher or peer mentoring
- Withdrawal of classroom privileges
- Community service
- Conflict mediation
- Contact with parent/guardian
- Referral to counselling
- Meeting with parent/guardian
- Office referral
- Detention
- Restitution for damages
- Restorative practices
- Follow up meeting with parent/guardian

Whole-school Interventions:

- Administrator call to parent/guardian
- Withdrawal from class
- Reflective activities/assignments
- Restitution for damages
- Restorative practices
- Community service
- Conflict mediation
- Administrator meeting with parent/guardian
- Referral to school support staff
- Referral to community agency

- Withdrawal of school privileges

Suspension/Expulsion

When the principal determines that a student has committed one or more infractions on school property, during school-related activities or events, and/or in circumstances off school property where the infraction has an impact on the school climate, the principal will consider whether that student should be suspended or be recommended to the Board Expulsion Committee.

Depending upon the seriousness and nature of the infraction, any level of consequence may be initiated.

Infractions That May Lead to Suspension*:*

- Uttering threats to inflict serious bodily harm
- Possessing alcohol or restricted drugs
- Being under the influence of alcohol
- Swearing at persons in position of authority
- Committing an act of vandalism
- Bullying
- Acts considered by the principal as injurious to the moral tone of school
- Acts considered by the principal to be injurious to the physical or mental well-being of others
- Acts considered by the principal to be contrary to the Board or school code of conduct

Suspension, Investigation and Possible Expulsion:

The principal shall suspend a student if he or she believes that the student has engaged in any of the following activities while at school, at a school-related activity or in other circumstances where engaging in the activity will have an impact on the school climate:

- Possessing a weapon, including possessing a firearm
- Using a weapon to cause or to threaten bodily harm to another person
- Committing physical assault on another person that causes bodily harm requiring treatment by a medical practitioner
- Committing sexual assault
- Trafficking in weapons or in illegal drugs
- Committing robbery
- Giving alcohol to a minor
- Bullying, if,
    i. the student has previously been suspended for engaging in bullying, and
    ii. the student's continuing presence in the school creates an unacceptable risk to the safety of another person
- any activity that should be considered for suspension and is motivated by bias, prejudice or hate based on race, national or ethnic origin, language,

colour, religion, sex, age, mental or physical disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, or any other similar factor

Note: If a student is suspended, he/she is suspended from his or her school and from engaging in all school-related activities.

Duration of suspension:

The principal may suspend a student from 1 to 20 school days, and in considering how long the suspension should be, the principal shall take into account any mitigating or other factors prescribed by the regulations.

Assignment to program:

When a principal suspends a student for 6 days or longer, he or she shall assign the student to a program for suspended students in accordance with the policies and guidelines issued by the Board.

Notification of Parents of Serious Student Incidents

The principal will notify the parents/guardians of any students who have been harmed as a result of any incident for which suspension or expulsion must be considered. The principal will inform them of the following:

a) the nature of the activity that resulted in harm to the student;
b) the nature of the harm to the student;
c) the steps taken to protect the student's safety, including the nature of any disciplinary measures taken in response to the activity;
d) the supports that will be provided for the student in response to the harm; and
e) the right of the parents or guardians to discuss these supports with the principal.

The principal will also notify the parents/guardians of any student who has engaged in the activity that resulted in harm. The principal will inform the parent/guardian of the following:

a) the nature of the activity that resulted in harm to the other student;
b) the nature of the harm to the other student;
c) the nature of any disciplinary measures taken in response to the activity;
d) the supports that will be provided for the student in response to his her engagement in the activity; and
e) the right of the parents or guardians to discuss these supports with the principal.

Note: The principal shall not notify the parents/guardians that their child was involved in a serious incident if, in the principal's opinion, doing so would put the student at risk of harm from the parents/guardians.

On-going Communication

Ongoing dialogue with parents on student achievement, well-being, and behaviour occurs through every step of our progressive discipline continuum. It begins with the student's classroom teacher and progresses to the school administration, if needed.

- The **student agenda** includes student expectations and key information so that parents/guardians understand the operation of the school and the rights and responsibilities of parents/guardians and students.
- The **School Website** is frequently updated to act as a key information and communication tool for parents and all members of our school community.
- Parents/guardians and students can post messages and questions to the general **school email account**: stephen@ocsb.ca
- Teachers are accessible **by phone** calls, and parents/guardians are encouraged to leave a message for the teacher they wish to speak to so that their call can be returned outside of class time.
- **Report cards** and **parent/teacher Interviews** are important connections between home and school.
- **Face-to-face meetings** can be arranged with the school staff responsible for your child's program each year (and may include resource staff and administration as well as classroom teachers).
- **School events** such as Open Houses, Meet the Educator Evening, sporting events, school performances, etc. provide opportunities for dialogue between school staff, students, and parents/guardians.

Partnerships

The following partnerships help promote a positive school environment and support the progressive discipline continuum at our school:

- Local parishes - Holy Spirit
- Ottawa Police Service
- Ottawa Fire Services
- Local community centres
- Schools, colleges, universities
- Local organizations - Stittsville Food Cupboard

Monitoring & Review

Every two years, school climate surveys will be conducted of students, parents/guardians, and staff in order to monitor the effectiveness of the prevention programs, interventions, and supports in place to support a safe, inclusive, and accepting school climate.

The results of the surveys will be shared with the school staff, the School Council, and the Safe and Accepting Schools Team.


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