



GUIDELINES ON
STUDENT BEHAVIOUR

At the Mill Academy we place a high value on the emotional well-being of our students. Our students are evolving as human beings rather than simply and solely as children. It is with this premise in mind that we have constructed our school policy on student behaviour.

The Oxford Dictionary defines discipline as '*training children to obey rules or code[s] of behaviour using punishment to correct disobedience*'. However, at the Mill Academy, our motto aligns with the definition of discipline as outlined by Amy Morin who states that 'discipline teaches children new skills such as how to manage their behaviour and solve problems. Discipline helps children learn from their mistakes and teaches those socially appropriate ways to deal with emotions, such as anger and disappointment'. At the Mill Academy, we understand that there must be consequences for misbehavior, but it is imperative that we employ actions and mechanisms that will prevent behavioral problems before they start.

At the Mill Academy we believe in being proactive to ensure the positive emotional well-being of our students

It is for this purpose that we have embraced the authoritative approach to discipline. This approach as purported by Amy Morin 'places a lot of effort into creating and maintaining a positive relationship with the child'. In accomplishing this, we at The Mill Academy view our students as important emotional beings who should be fully informed about the reasons for rules and regulations.

Additionally, the consequences devised to treat with unwanted behaviour should be influenced by consideration for the context in which our students express their feelings and act out; in other words, "seek first to understand and then to be understood" (Covey, 1990¹). Our aim is to mold our students into well-rounded and healthy individuals through learning valuable life lessons while unlocking their potential.

¹ Covey, S. (1990). *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People*. New York, NY: Simon & Schuster.

Disciplinary Measures in Practice

At the Mill Academy we aim to promote the holistic development of our students in a caring, safe, and positive environment where they feel appreciated and experience a measure of autonomy. Most importantly, our students must feel a sense of belonging, display respect for themselves and each other, and display respect for their teachers, as well as for other adults.

Mill utilizes a system based on the tenets of Positive Reinforcement². To practice positive reinforcement in our classrooms primarily, Guides will be expected to influence more positive student behavior through the use of 'Behavior Charts'. When students show appropriate or specific behavior, positive reinforcers such as points or tokens (in the form of gold stars) are put on the students' Behavior Chart in the classroom. When the points accumulate to a certain amount, the students can exchange them for various rewards and/or awards on a periodic basis to be determined (weekly, monthly, etc.).

Avoiding punishment is a welcome change for both students and teachers. There is less of a power struggle, and since students are more receptive to positive reinforcement, this method seems to yield excellent results in school settings³. Positive Reinforcement mechanisms have a demonstrated track record of often being better than punishment. While punishment is sometimes quick in stopping negative behavior, it doesn't teach what appropriate behavior actually is. Positive reinforcement shifts the attention from negative to acceptable behavior by rewarding the acceptable.

² Positive reinforcement occurs when a certain behavior results in a positive outcome or reward, making the behavior likely to be repeated in the future. This behavioral psychology concept can be used to teach and strengthen preferred behavior.

³ www.parentingforbrain.com (2023).

It is upon this foundation of positive reinforcement that we formulated the following disciplinary policies⁴ to be implemented at the Mill Academy:

1. When there are disagreements amongst our students, they will be asked to mentally reflect on what happened, answering questions, such as “What rule was broken?” and “What could I have done differently?” and “What can I do to fix it?”
2. A behavioral journal (book) will be kept in the class and the disruptive behavior of students will be recorded by the teacher for the purposes of monitoring and evaluation (not necessarily to be added to the permanent records of students).

It is anticipated that all students will be in possession of a 10-Year Blueprint Journal, in which they can write reflections and action plans anytime they are upset. This action will be used primarily for Grades 4 to 6 as older primary students (students between the ages of 9 to 12) are more adept at problem solving. They will be expected to reflect on and assess their actions, then formulate strategies to resolve situations (Durrant, 2010⁵).

3. Disruptive students will be given a timeout for a short period (general research suggests 1 minute for every year of the child’s age) so that other students may continue to learn. This form of discipline will be used primarily for the younger students from Kindergarten – Grade 3. Disruptive behavior will be reported to the parents. Parents will be invited to a meeting with the principal if the disruptive behavior persists consistently over a period (to be determined by a special Sub-Committee on Discipline). A description of the parent interactive process will be elaborated upon further in this document.
4. The Guide/teacher will be asked to employ “restorative justice”, in other words, “if you break it, you fix it.” If a student has hurt another’s feelings, what will be the expectations for mending/resolving the offense? If property is destroyed, how will it be replaced?

⁴ Limitations and further research: During the compilation of this document, the primary researcher had difficulty in locating studies aligning specific disciplinary measures to age groups of children. The secondary sources studied did not discuss this aspect in depth. It is therefore the conclusion of the researcher that further studies are carried out to determine the most appropriate disciplinary action for various age groups as children develop differently at different stages.

⁵ Joan E. Durrant PhD. 2010 article entitled, ‘Positive Discipline in Everyday Teaching’ downloaded at <https://resourcecentre.savethechildren.net/document/what-positive-discipline-positive-discipline-everyday-teaching/> (February 2023).

5. Colour, paint or draw or make a poster to show a positive response to a negative behavior.
6. Sweep or clean the environment (not as punishment but as a contribution to the classroom – repairing harm and getting out physical energy too).
7. Students can perform physical activities such as walking, breathing exercises, or running to release tension and anxiety.
8. The student will do the teacher a favor and help out. The student will be placed in another room to perform some activity that directly contributes to the class but allows the child his/her own space away from the classroom for a time.
9. The student will be expected to have a private session with the teacher and/or the principal, depending on the offense and whether a pattern of negative behaviour has been established.
10. Students may be asked to carry out specific tasks to develop a strong sense of responsibility (tasks to be determined by a special sub-committee).

Role of Guides (Teachers)

Guides are expected to maintain a significant amount of order both in class and on the shared spaces of the school premises, while remaining flexible, encouraging, and open to the wellbeing of students.

Specifically, for in-class periods, Guides are expected to:

1. Check their classroom environment, making sure that the classroom is neither chaotic, nor lacking in structure;
2. Maintain a climate of respect in the classroom;
3. Maintain a healthy level of consistency during the school day to discourage disruptive behaviour by students;
4. Ensure that students are fully briefed in the rules and structure that support order and encourage positive behaviour.

5. Follow the 'Reward and Consequences Steps' in keeping with the Mill Academy's policy of positive reinforcement (Guides will be trained in measures to facilitate classroom management).
6. If the undesirable behaviour is continuous, it is time to examine it on a deeper level to see beyond the behaviour and discern the need of the child, for example, the student may be acting out in response to an inability to cope with the class content on offer. There may be a learning disability at play, rendering the child unable to follow the class with his/her peers. Target the behaviour, observe the pattern over time, and check to see what the student gains or avoids in the targeted behaviour. After making some informed conclusions, offer 'alternate replacement behaviour'⁶ using constructive and respectful communication techniques.

Although we emphasise the use of positive rewards, often negative consequences are necessary to modify children's behaviour. All incidents will be recorded in a 'Behaviour Logbook'. The table below is a guide to the disciplinary actions to be implemented to discourage undesirable, unfavourable, or harmful behaviour in Mill students. Unless a behavioural incident is serious, these steps are followed in order, i.e. a warning is given to the student as a first consequence moving up in severity if the behaviour continues. (N.B. Please also note the Glossary of terms at Appendix I to this document).

The class teacher will implement disciplinary actions for all minor offenses. All major infractions/offenses will immediately be referred to the principal.

Table 1: Actions to Guide Student Behaviour

Offense	Disciplinary Action	Explanation/Further Comments
MINOR OFFENSES		

⁶ Feed Their Needs YouTube Channel: "Behavior Management | How to Handle Disruptive Behaviors in Your Classroom", https://youtu.be/A_rxSztXm0g (downloaded on 16 March 2023).

Offense	Disciplinary Action	Explanation/Further Comments
1. Disruption of Class (including eating during class time)	Time out. (The Guide/teacher will decide if the student remains in the classroom or will be placed in a separate room. (N.B. One minute for each year of the child's age)	All age groups.
	A specific task is given, for example the students hand out the books.	All age groups.
	Counseling.	All age groups.
2. Littering the classroom or on the school compound	Watch a video on the importance of not littering.	For all ages
	Sweep/clean the area	For all ages
	Assist in the cafeteria.	For ages 9 and above.
3. Being dishonest/lying	Replace items where applicable.	All age groups.
	Counseling, followed by the student delivering an apology.	All age groups.
	Inward reflection (writing in journal)	All age groups. The student will be asked to reflect and write in their journal. The Guide/Principal will also spend time reflecting and speaking with the student.
	The Guide may activate the Class Privilege Agreement.	All age groups. At the start of the term Students and Guides will carry out an exercise where they agree to a system of actions and consequences which will lead to a forfeiture of class privileges whenever students display unwanted behaviour.
4. The use of inappropriate language (e.g. swearing, teasing, name calling, verbal abuse)	Counseling.	All age groups.
	Inward reflection (writing in journal).	Younger students will be asked to doodle and draw. For older students, ages 8 and above. If

Offense	Disciplinary Action	Explanation/Further Comments
		younger students can write, this measure can also be applied on a case-by-case basis.
	Reflective Time out.	All age groups.
	The Guide may activate the Class Privilege Agreement.	All age groups. At the start of the term Students and Guides will carry out an exercise where they agree to a system of actions and consequences which will lead to a forfeiture of class privileges whenever students display unwanted behaviour.
	Inward reflection (writing in journal)	All age groups. The student will be asked to reflect and write in journal. The Guide/Principal will also spend time reflecting and speaking with the student.
	Reduced play time.	All age groups.
SERIOUS OFFENSES		
5. Stealing (food theft or other small items)	Counseling.	All age groups.
	Inward reflection (writing in journal)	All age groups. The student will be asked to reflect and write in their journal. The Guide/Principal will also spend time reflecting and speaking with the student. If younger students can write, this measure can also be applied on a case-by-case basis. If not, they will be asked to colour an emoji chart.
	Loss of privilege.	All age groups. (See Glossary)
	Time out.	All age groups.
	The Guide may activate the Class Privilege Agreement.	All age groups. At the start of the term Students and Guides will carry out an exercise where

Offense	Disciplinary Action	Explanation/Further Comments
		they agree to a system of actions and consequences which will lead to a forfeiture of class privileges whenever students display unwanted behaviour.
	Inward reflection (writing in journal)	All age groups. The student will be asked to reflect and write in their journal. The Guide/Principal will also spend time reflecting and speaking with the student.
6.Hitting other students (causing physical harm to others)	Time out and apology.	All age groups.
	Personal journal writing and apology.	For older students, ages 8 and above. If younger students can write, this measure can also be applied on a case-by-case basis. An apology can be issued by younger students with assistance where applicable.
	The Guide may decide to take away a class privilege.	All age groups.
	Reduced play time.	All age groups.
	Assist in the cafeteria.	For ages 9 and above.
	Counseling.	All age groups.
7.Disrespecting peers	Reflective Time out.	All age groups.
	Personal journal writing and apology.	For older students, ages 8 and above. If younger students can write, this measure can also be applied on a case-by-case basis. Colouring can be issued in the case of younger students.
	The Guide may activate the Class Privilege Agreement.	All age groups. At the start of the term Students and Guides will carry out an exercise where they agree to a system of

Offense	Disciplinary Action	Explanation/Further Comments
		actions and consequences which will lead to a forfeiture of class privileges whenever students display unwanted behaviour.
	Reduced play time.	All age groups.
	Come in from play.	All age groups.
	Assist in the cafeteria.	For ages 9 and above.
	Counseling.	All age groups.
8.Consistent tardiness (being late regularly)	Personal journal writing – reflection and resolution.	Parents may be required to participate in this process.
9.Inappropriate use of electronic devices (using cellular phones or electronic devices without permission).	To avoid this particular offense, Students and Guides will speak in depth on the appropriate use of devices during and outside of class time.	
	Reflective Time out.	All age groups.
	Reduced play time.	All age groups.
	Loss of privilege	All age groups.
	Confiscation of device (students will pay a fee for the return of item on the second offense).	All age groups. This particular act should be a last resort mechanism.
10. Inappropriate behaviour in restrooms	Reflective Time out.	All age groups.
	Physical activity.	All age groups.
	The Guide may activate the Class Privilege Agreement.	All age groups. At the start of the term Students and Guides will carry out an exercise where they agree to a system of actions and consequences which will lead to a forfeiture of class privileges whenever

Offense	Disciplinary Action	Explanation/Further Comments
		students display unwanted behaviour.
	Loss of play time in favour of personal journal writing – reflection and resolution.	All age groups.
	Inward reflection (writing in journal)	All age groups. The student will be asked to reflect and write in their journal. The Guide/Principal will also spend time reflecting and speaking with the student.
11. Cheating on assignments, quizzes and tests	Reflective Time out and counseling.	All age groups. The student will also be asked to resit/retake a quiz, test or exam. In the event that this cannot be done, the student will forfeit the grade or percentage of grade that should have been earned with a successful, fair sitting.
	Inward reflection (writing in journal)	All age groups. The student will be asked to reflect and write in their journal. The Guide/Principal will also spend time reflecting and speaking with the student.
	Reduced play time.	All age groups.
	Inward reflection (writing in journal)	Older students. Colouring for younger students.
	Loss of privilege.	All age groups.

Some exceptions may include offenses such as inappropriate clothing or footwear. In this instance, parents will be consulted if offenses occur regularly for this issue.

The disciplinary actions will vary class by class for each offense based on the severity of the misbehaviour and the age group. An explanation (glossary) of disciplinary actions can be found at Appendix I to this document.

Role of Parents

Parents will always be informed when a serious incident takes place through a carefully considered process of communication which will be outlined. Parents are central figures in the application of quality behaviour management. Their ongoing support is essential to the development of students. The Mill Academy will also provide a Parents Guidebook to parents.

Process:

1. Parent(s) will be contacted and asked to meet at the school. The initial meeting with parents is aimed at putting an immediate stop to the negative behaviour through activating the Parent-School partnership. The initial meeting will assist to inform the parent about the incident, as well as to build mutual trust and common ground between school and parent to exercise a mutually agreed mode of joint action where applicable.
2. If the negative behaviour continues, the school will communicate with parents each week to receive a report from the teacher regarding the persistent misbehaviour. A report book may be sent home with a child every day for at least two weeks in the first instance.
3. If the persistent misbehaviour continues, the principal may ask parents for their agreement in approaching the relevant support services. Further actions would have to be taken.

N.B. Grounds for suspending a student include serious infractions such as:

- Verbal aggressions against teachers;
- Physical aggression against teachers and other students, especially instances where serious bodily harm occurs;
- Racist and/or sexist verbal outbursts to teachers and other students; and
- Defacing and/or damaging school property, thereby incurring serious repair costs to the Academy.

We are convinced that these policies will help our students to develop healthy relations with their peers, teachers, and their parents who are our vital partners in this relationship. The Mill Academy placed its focus on the creation of a positive school environment, as well as the inclusion of both students and parents in the process of solving discipline issues⁷. ‘Experiencing positive discipline instills a desire to possess and demonstrate self-discipline. People who learn through positive discipline show its positive effects in their personalities, including:

- They have clear goals.
- They believe in themselves.
- They are self-motivated.
- They are willing to work hard for their goals.
- They trust their own judgment.
- They think of new ways to solve old problems.
- They are persistent.
- Their self-discipline comes from within, because they feel positive about themselves and the people around them.
- They respect themselves and recognize that each person has a meaningful contribution to make to our collective development.
- Through many different experiences, they realize that their decisions and actions determine whether or not they will succeed.
- They learn to accept responsibility for their destiny.’

As educators at Mill Academy our goal is to cultivate confidence in our students to actualise their potential.



⁷ Dimov et al, Conference paper on “School Discipline and School Indiscipline”.

GLOSSARY

1. Reflective Time outs will be given to all age groups. The teacher will decide whether the time out is in the classroom or in a separate room. One minute will be given for each year. For example, if the child is seven years, the time out will be for seven minutes. These timeouts are referred to as 'reflective' because the child will be expected to meditate and reflect on the action. Guides will be involved in this process to speak with the child.
2. Sweep/clean the classroom or a specified space on the school plant. This activity will develop the social skill of teaching the student responsibility. This will be administered to students seven years and older.
3. Assist in the cafeteria: This activity will develop the social skill of teaching the student responsibility and consequences. This will be administered to students eight years and older.
4. Journal writing: The idea of being reflective is key. Students will record their thoughts and feelings about the infraction. They are guided by their teacher to consider the negative and positive reactions as they formulate a better way in which they could have handled the situation. This activity is appropriate for students eight years and older. In the case of younger students, colouring images of emojis and taking time to express how they feel with a Guide will be prescribed.
5. Replace stolen items: This is applicable to all age groups in the event that items are missing.
6. Counseling: Students of all ages will be able to discuss with either the Guide/teacher or the principal why he/ she reacted in a particular way. Talking through the situation will give insight into the inappropriate behaviour, as well as reaching a compromise, which will prevent the recurrence of the negative behaviour.
7. Physical activity: This is applicable for all age groups. This is a great way for students who are upset or angry to manage their behaviour. For, example, a

student under the direction of the teacher will perform breathing exercises. Additionally, a student can be asked to perform simple exercise as a soothing technique.

8. Confiscation: This is applicable to all ages. Confiscation would be carried out in those instances where unauthorised items were used without permission or there was misuse of creating harm to the student or others. Confiscation will be employed as a last resort.
9. Take away privilege: This is applicable to all ages. The teacher can take away the privilege of drawing, play time or using a specific item, or a position in the class or for an extracurricular activity.
10. Reduced play time: (See above and also 'come in from play'). This is applicable to all ages. Only applicable during instances where undesired behaviour is happening during play or recreational time.
11. Come in from play: This is applicable to all ages and occurs primarily when the child is outside, for example break or Physical Education.
12. Loss of privilege: Students will be denied the opportunity to represent the school at specific functions, or any non-curriculum activities such as field trips, school/class fun day or play time.
13. Serious or major behavioural offenses: **i.e. instances of verbal aggression (uttering threats), physical aggression against life and property, any form of racial discrimination, defacing school property, serious/major theft, vandalism, inappropriate representation of the school (e.g. on a field trip or educational event), weapons, sexual behaviour, fighting, bullying (as confirmed by the principal) or where students are posing to be a danger to themselves and to others, are referred to the Principal immediately.**