



## Section 10

### *Discipline Policies*

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- **Bullying**
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#### **BULLYING**

Lighthouse Christian School is committed to each student's success in learning within a Christ-centered, caring, responsive, and safe environment that is free of discrimination, violence, and bullying. Our school works to ensure that all students have the opportunity and support to develop to their fullest potential. We commit to fostering learning environments and experiences that enable all students to share personal and meaningful bonds with people in the school community.

Bullying is unwanted, aggressive behavior among school-aged children that involves a real or perceived power imbalance. The behavior is repeated, or has the potential to be repeated over time. It is recognized that kids who are bullied and kids who bully others may have serious, lasting problems.

To be considered bullying, the behavior must be aggressive and include:

- **An Imbalance of Power:** Kids who bully use their power—such as physical strength, access to embarrassing information, or popularity—to control or harm others. Power imbalances can change over time and in different situations, even if they involve the same people.
- **Repetition:** Bullying behaviors happen more than once or have the potential to happen more than once.

Bullying includes actions such as making threats, spreading rumors, attacking someone physically or verbally, and excluding someone from a group on purpose. (This information is taken from the website [stopbullying.gov](http://stopbullying.gov).)

There are also some behaviors, which, although they might be unpleasant or distressing and may require disciplinary action, are *not* bullying, including:

- Mutual conflict.
  - Single-episode acts.
  - Social rejection or dislike.
  - Not liking someone.
  - Not being included in a game or conversation.
  - Accidentally bumping into someone.
  - Making other kids play in a certain way.
  - A single act of telling a joke about someone.
  - Arguments or expression of unpleasant thoughts or feelings regarding others.
  - Isolated acts of harassment, aggressive behavior, intimidation, or meanness.
- (Courtesy of Ronit Baras: Bullying Series)

#### **Building Partnerships**

Relationships that engage the whole school community and its parents promote a positive school environment and support the progressive discipline continuum. Protocols between the school and community agencies are effective ways to establish linkages, and to formalize the relationship between them. These protocols facilitate the delivery of prevention and response programs, the use of referral processes, and the provision of services and support for students and their parents and families.

To facilitate the building of partnerships, Lighthouse Christian School will maintain an up-to-date contact list of community agencies or organizations that have professional expertise to support the school's students, their parents, and families. Resources are also provided on our website to aid parents with different potential discipline incidents, including potential bullying.

### **Training Strategy for Administrators, Teachers, and Other School Staff**

LCS will put in place a training strategy for all administrators, teachers, and other school staff (as needed) regarding the school's progressive discipline policy. The training will address the fact that building a supportive learning environment through appropriate interactions between all members of the school community is the responsibility of all staff.

LCS will support ongoing training for all staff, through such opportunities as new-teacher induction programs and e-learning to create and sustain a safe teaching and learning environment. The school will ensure that others are aware of the school's progressive discipline policy (e.g., facilities staff, contract workers, and parents).

### **Communication Strategy**

For a progressive discipline approach to be effective, it is important that all members of the school community, including teachers, staff, students, and parents, understand and support the progressive discipline approach. LCS will actively communicate policies and procedures to all students, parents, staff members, and community members as applicable.

### **Monitoring and Review**

The school will establish performance indicators for monitoring, reviewing, and evaluating the effectiveness of this policy and its procedures. These indicators will be developed in consultation with teachers, students, and parents. The school will also conduct a cyclical review of all policies and procedures in a timely manner.

## **PROGRESSIVE DISCIPLINE POLICY**

### **Context and Guidelines**

The discipline at Lighthouse Christian School does not emphasize punishment but rather focuses student growth through discipleship and restoration. A **progressive discipline policy** provides a framework to build, support, and maintain a positive school climate that focuses on progressive discipline and promotes positive student behavior, with the ultimate goal of students being conformed into the image of Christ (Romans 8:29). This policy should be read in context of the Parent Student Handbook, which outlines the LCS policies and procedures related to bullying, student conduct, conflict resolution, dress code/uniform, technology usage, sexual harassment, civility, and parent partnership. Other principal documents that guide disciplinary policy are the LCS Mission Statement, Statement of Faith, and Core Values.

Therefore, progressive discipline cannot exclude a restorative practice, which can be used to help bring about justice and restoration; nor can it ignore a responsive classroom practice, which can be used to help bring about mutual respect and proactive strategies towards self-discipline. Rules and expectations are in place so that learning and interaction can take place within a positive school climate that is God-honoring and upholds the following guidelines:

1. **Discipleship:** Discipline is a strong part of discipleship, just like it is a strong part of good parenting. (Matthew 28:19,20)
2. **Adherence to Biblical Principles:** Our discipline standards are based on God's Word. Honesty, kindness, self-control among other characteristics of the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:23) is the goal. Words and behavior that are opposite to these standards will need to be addressed.
3. **Student's Sin Nature:** Like all of us, students will sin. Sin is doing the wrong thing based on selfish reasons. Kids will lie, cheat, steal, hurt others in word or deed, because they have a sin nature. This is why we need a discipline policy based on God's Word and a focus on discipleship in working to restore students. (Romans 3:23; I John 1:9)
4. **Student Growth:** Lighthouse is never going to expect perfection. That is impossible. Our goal is growth.
5. We want every student to grow in excellence not just in academics, but also in character development and leadership capacity. This requires spiritual growth reflected by a student's word and behavior choices that are aligned to biblical standards. (Colossians 1:10, I Timothy 4:15)

### **Definition**

A natural progression of consequences will occur between levels when student behavior does not evidence satisfactory improvement. Factors that determine the natural consequence include the severity of the offense, student response, history of offenses, and supervisory feedback.

Progressive discipline is a whole-school approach that utilizes a continuum of interventions, supports, and consequences to address inappropriate student behavior and to build upon strategies that promote positive behaviors. When inappropriate behavior occurs, disciplinary measures should be applied within a framework that shifts the focus from one that is solely punitive to one that is both corrective and supportive.

Progressive discipline is a process designed to create the expectation that the degree of discipline will be in proportion to the severity of the behavior leading to the discipline and that the previous disciplinary history of the student and all other relevant factors will be considered. In addition, progressive discipline must take into account the needs of individual students.

### **Policy Principles**

Lighthouse Christian School (the "School") recognizes the goal of the policy is to support a safe and mission-focused learning environment in which every student can reach their full potential. All inappropriate student behavior, including bullying, is unwanted and must be addressed. Responses to behaviors that are contrary to the School's Code of Conduct and/or standards of behavior must be developmentally appropriate.

Progressive discipline is an approach that makes use of a continuum of prevention programs, interventions, supports, and consequences, building upon strategies that build skills for healthy relationships and promote positive behaviors. The range of interventions, supports, and consequences used by the school must be clear and developmentally appropriate, and must include learning opportunities for students in order to reinforce positive behaviors and help students make good choices.

All discipline incidents must be investigated as thoroughly as possible and require partnership with parents in its implementation.

The school and its administrators must consider all mitigating and other factors, including using interventions, consequences, and supports for students with special education needs that shall be consistent with the expectations in the student's Personal Learning Plan.

### **Progressive Discipline Framework**

A progressive discipline approach promotes positive student behavior through strategies that include:

- Using prevention programs and early and ongoing interventions and supports;
- Reporting incidents for which the principal will consider student discipline; and
- Responding to incidents of inappropriate and disrespectful behavior when they occur.

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

The school will actively engage parents in the progressive discipline approach and actively encourage stakeholders to report incidents that need attention.

### **Early and Ongoing Intervention Strategies**

Early and ongoing interventions strategies will help prevent unsafe or inappropriate behaviors at school and school-related activities. Intervention strategies should provide students with appropriate supports that address inappropriate behavior and that would result in an improved school climate. For example, early interventions may include, but are not limited to the following:

- Preemptive educational opportunities (anti-bullying curriculum, chapel messages, Bible lessons);
- Consultation with parents and others;
- Restorative conversations;
- Restorative classroom conference;
- Verbal reminders;
- Review of expectations; and/or
- A written work assignment with a learning component that requires reflection.

In considering other responses to address inappropriate behavior, the following could be taken into consideration:

- Behavior contracts;
- Time out;
- Reflection sheet;
- Loss of privilege in specified school activities;
- Detention;
- School-related community service; and/or
- Restorative practices.

Where inappropriate behavior persists, ongoing interventions may be necessary to sustain and promote positive student behavior and/or address underlying causes of inappropriate behavior. For example, ongoing interventions may include, but are not limited to the following:

- Meeting with parents;
- Requiring the student to perform volunteer service to the school community;
- Conflict mediation;
- Peer mediation; and/or
- Referral to counseling, including group counseling.

In considering the most appropriate response to address inappropriate behavior, the following should be taken into consideration:

- The particular student and circumstances (e.g., mitigating or other factors);
- The nature and severity of the behavior; and
- The impact on the school climate (i.e., the relationships within the school community).

## **Responding to Incidents**

The purpose of responding to incidents of inappropriate and disrespectful behavior is to stop and correct such behavior immediately so that students can learn that it is unacceptable.

Consistent with a Biblical worldview and significant to meaningful and enduring academic and socially balanced learning, employees will use “Love and Logic” as principles and guidelines for student interactions, student disagreements, and de-escalation matters which include the following:

- Adults are responsible for setting limits in the school, in a respectful and empathetic way.
- Mistakes are wonderful opportunities for important learning.
- Children need practice in problem solving if they are to develop powerful problem-solving skills for life.
- Practicing habits of respectful behavior toward others is a valuable habit for life.
- Relationships and trust are the foundation of a learning community.
- Great school employees weave the elements of great learning into a caring classroom, avoid coercive behavior, and carefully train themselves to adjust their own responses to help students be successful.
- Great teachers see the miracle in every child, find the strengths in every person, and expect great things from everyone they teach.

(Citation: Schoolwide Discipline Plan Without the Loopholes, Jim Fay 2005)

School employees who work directly with students, including administrators, teachers, and non-teaching staff, must respond to any student behavior that is likely to have a negative impact on the school climate.

Such behavior includes all inappropriate and disrespectful behavior at any time at school and any school-related event (if, in the employee’s opinion, it is safe to respond to it). Such behavior may involve swearing; insensitive or inappropriate jokes; and/or remarks or mockery related to race, ethnicity, sex, religion, physical appearance, ability, or family. Physical harm, threats of violence, theft, graffiti, vandalism, and defiance would all require an immediate disciplinary response. Responding may include:

- Asking a student to stop the inappropriate behavior;
- Naming the type of behavior and explaining why it is inappropriate and/or disrespectful; and
- Asking the student to correct the behavior (e.g., to apologize for or rephrase a hurtful comment and promise not to do it again).
- Bringing in an administrator for major infractions

By responding this way, employees immediately address inappropriate student behavior that may negatively impact the school climate.

In some circumstances, short-term suspension may be a useful tool. In the case of a serious student incident, a suspension or expulsion, which is further along the continuum of progressive discipline, may be the response that is required. Any potential serious student discipline incident must be reported to school administration.

## **Reporting to School Administration**

The purpose of reporting incidents of inappropriate and disrespectful behavior is to ensure that administration is aware of all activities taking place in the school for which student discipline must be taken.

A school employee who becomes aware that a student may have engaged in an activity for which student discipline must be considered will report the matter to administration as soon as reasonably possible. The employee must consider the safety of others and the urgency of the situation in reporting the incident, but, in any case, must report it to administration no later than the end of the school day.

In cases where immediate action is required, a verbal report to administration may be made. A written report may be made at an appropriate time.

### **Administrative Decision-making and Appeal Process**

If at any point in the process of dealing with an infraction, the student(s) involved displays an attitude of defiance or disrespect, the situation may increase the progression of consequences.

Parents may only appeal a discipline situation based on an improper implementation of the school's discipline procedures.

Administration is charged with the effective implementation of the school's methods and standards within the discipline policy. The Head of School retains the right as the final decision-maker in all matters regarding discipline.

### **STUDENT RESPECT AND RESPONSE TO SCHOOL AUTHORITY**

**Overview:** At Lighthouse Christian School, we are committed to fostering a learning environment that reflects both academic excellence and biblical values. As a school that honors Christian principles, we believe that all students are created in the image of God and are called to treat others with respect, kindness, and humility. Our policy on student disrespect and defiance is grounded not only in promoting a safe and positive school environment, but also in teaching students to reflect Christ-like behavior in their interactions with authority figures and others.

**Biblical Foundation:** The Bible provides clear guidance on how we are to treat one another and how we are to conduct ourselves in the presence of authority. Our approach to managing disrespect and defiance is rooted in the following key biblical principles:

#### **1. The Call to Honor and Respect Authority**

- a. In Romans 13:1, the Bible teaches, *"Let everyone be subject to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established."* This emphasizes that respect for authority, including teachers and school staff, is not just a matter of following rules, but a way of honoring God's design for order and leadership.
- b. Ephesians 6:1-3 also encourages children to "obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. Honor your father and mother," which can be extended to honor and respect for all those in positions of authority.

#### **2. The Value of Kindness and Humility**

- a. The Bible calls us to treat others with love and kindness. In Colossians 3:12-13, it states, *"Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience. Bear with each other and forgive one another..."* Students are encouraged to show respect and kindness in their words and actions, not just to peers, but to all members of the school community.
- b. Proverbs 15:1 reminds us that, *"A gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger."* We believe that addressing disrespectful or defiant behavior with patience and gentleness helps foster an environment where students can learn and grow in their relationships with others.

#### **3. Restorative Justice and Reconciliation**

- a. Matthew 18:15-17 provides a biblical model for reconciliation when conflicts arise. Jesus teaches that if someone sins against you, you should first approach them privately to resolve the matter. This principle of addressing issues directly and seeking peace is central to our approach to managing disrespect and defiance. Restorative practices, where students are encouraged to make amends and restore relationships, reflect this biblical value of reconciliation and forgiveness.

- b. Galatians 6:1-2 reminds us to *“restore gently”* those who have gone astray and to *“carry each other’s burdens”*—a call for compassion and care in addressing behavioral issues.

#### **4. Self-Control and Responsibility**

- a. Proverbs 16:32 highlights the importance of self-control: *“Better a patient person than a warrior, those with self-control than those who take a city.”* This verse teaches that it is far greater to show patience and restraint than to act impulsively in anger or frustration. We believe that part of our responsibility as a school is to help students learn to manage their emotions and actions in accordance with God’s wisdom.
- b. 2 Timothy 1:7 affirms that *“God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control.”* Our school strives to help students develop self-control, recognizing that they have the capacity, with God’s help, to choose how they respond to others, even in challenging situations.

**Purpose of the Policy:** The purpose of this policy is to ensure that all staff and students are treated with dignity and respect, and to encourage them to treat others in the same way. We believe that each student has inherent worth because they are created by God, and we are committed to helping students grow in their character by following the teachings of Scripture.

Our policy on student disrespect and defiance serves not only to maintain order but also to guide students toward becoming individuals who embody the values of love, respect, humility, and responsibility. Through biblical teaching and the application of restorative practices, we aim to foster an environment where students can learn not only academic subjects, but also how to live out their faith in practical, everyday interactions.

#### **Definition of Disrespect and Defiance:**

- **Disrespect** refers to any behavior that undermines the dignity of others, including but not limited to rude language, mocking, or disregarding the feelings of teachers, staff, or peers.
- **Defiance** involves the refusal to comply with reasonable requests or directions from school staff, intentionally disrupting the learning environment, or challenging authority in a disruptive manner.

These behaviors can include, but are not limited to:

- Speaking in a disrespectful tone or using inappropriate language.
- Ignoring instructions given by teachers or staff.
- Engaging in behavior that disrupts the classroom or school environment.
- Publicly challenging or arguing with staff members.
- Showing a lack of cooperation with school rules or procedures.

#### **Expectations:**

- Students are expected to show respect towards all members of the school community, including classmates, teachers, staff, and visitors.
- Students must follow all reasonable requests or directions given by school staff, even if they do not agree with them.
- Students are expected to maintain appropriate conduct in the classroom, hallways, and other school areas, and to refrain from any actions that disrupt the learning process.

**Interventions and Consequences:** Our approach to managing disrespect and defiance is based on restorative practices, consistent discipline, and a focus on understanding the underlying causes of behavior. We aim to address these behaviors constructively and help students learn how to better manage their emotions and actions in conjunction with our progressive discipline policy.

1. **Verbal Warning:** A staff member will provide a clear, calm reminder of expected behavior. If the student continues to display disrespectful or defiant behavior, further action will be taken.

2. **Classroom Consequence:** If the behavior continues, a more specific consequence may be applied, such as a temporary removal from the classroom or a meeting with the student to discuss their actions.
3. **Parent/Guardian Notification:** If the behavior persists, the school will notify the student's parent(s) or guardian(s) to discuss the situation and work together on a plan to improve behavior.
4. **Referral to Administration:** If the behavior is serious or if previous interventions have not led to improvement, the student may be referred to the school administration for further action. This may include additional meetings with the student, parents/guardians, and counseling staff.
5. **Restorative Practices:** In cases where appropriate, the school may implement restorative justice practices, such as facilitating a conversation between the student and those they have disrespected, to help repair relationships and encourage personal growth.
6. **Disciplinary Action:** In cases of severe or repeated disrespect and defiance, students may face further disciplinary actions, including in-school suspension (ISS), out-of-school suspension (OSS), or even expulsion, depending on the severity and frequency of the behavior.

**Support for Students:** We recognize that there may be underlying reasons for some students' behavior, such as personal challenges or unmet needs. The school is committed to providing support, including:

- **Counseling check-ins** for students who may be struggling with emotional or behavioral issues.
- **Conflict resolution training** that help students develop better communication and coping skills.
- **Behavioral interventions** and individualized support plans to address chronic issues with defiance or disrespect.

**Conclusion:** In addressing student disrespect and defiance, we uphold biblical principles that call us to respect authority, treat others with kindness, seek reconciliation, and exercise self-control. This policy is an expression of our commitment to creating a school community that reflects the love and teachings of Jesus Christ. By following these principles, we believe students will develop not only in their academic abilities, but also in their character and faith, preparing them to live lives that honor God and positively impact the world around them. Respect and cooperation are essential for a positive and productive school environment. This policy is designed to support students in understanding the impact of their actions and help them develop better ways to interact with others. Through consistent expectations, clear consequences, and ongoing support, we aim to foster a school culture where every student can succeed.

**Summary Talking Points:**

- All people are made in the image of God and have worth.
- All authority figures are to be given honor and respect.
- Honor and respect are given, taught, expected, and enforced.
- School leadership will uphold the policy and assess student growth in this area.