FORT McMURRAY CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

(Revised August 2024)

A Call to Responsibility

Student Discipline and Discipleship

Learning to love the Lord, our neighbour, and ourselves

Discipline: Learning to Make Life-giving Choices

Jesus came that we might have life and have it to the full (John 10:10). Discipline in our schools is about students learning to choose life to the full and becoming disciples of Jesus.

The formation of a child into discipleship is primarily the responsibility of parents. The school staff works in partnership with them. Together, we foster the child's self-discipline and self-esteem. We also help develop his/her conscience, and for positive behaviours and growth, we provide the following conditions:

• a pro-active authority style that is neither permissive nor autocratic;
• remedies for misbehaviour that develop discipline and form a positive identity in the child;
• an emphasis on consequences rather than punishment or rewards;
• a safe and welcoming environment;
• high quality classroom instruction.

Our approach to discipline respects each student's uniqueness and the common good of the school. Regardless of the misbehaviour, our goal is to reconnect our students with the school community after a problem.

We regard our students as persons with free will. We assist them in developing virtue and character. We help them learn to make life-giving choices valuing persons, community, responsibility and learning.

Formative Expectations Towards Discipleship

We help students:

- celebrate the dignity of all
- grow to their full potential
- safeguard the gift of life
- build community through service to others
- demonstrate empathy, mutual respect and inclusion of all
- accept personal responsibility for their words and actions
- mature from dependence to independence to inter-dependence
- develop self-discipline and self control
- exercise stewardship for the environment and resources
- dedicate themselves to inquiry, hard work, expanding personal interests, and life-long learning

Positive Behaviours

Students will:

- contribute to a productive, safe, and inclusive learning environment
- refrain from, report and not tolerate bullying or bullying behaviour
- act and dress with respect and dignity
- promote the common good and the reputation of Catholic schools
- respectfully obey requests, directions, rules, and laws of the school and the community
- be truthful, and use courteous language and actions
- make appropriate restitution to others for harm caused
- attend school punctually and consistently
- use learning resources wisely
- be prepared for learning with materials and a positive attitude
- actively participate in learning; complete and submit all work in a timely manner

Principles of Practice

- We hold students responsible for their choices, directing them to develop a personal code of conduct and to learn cause and effect. In our schools, they will experience natural and logical consequences for their actions rather than punishments or rewards.
- We expect students to restore what they have damaged and reconcile with those they have hurt.
- We offer encouragement, which is focused on specific, skill-related strengths, rather than praise, which gives approval without a specific reason.
- We employ a pro-active use of authority; controlling the situation rather than the student. Instead of "giving orders" or "giving in", we give choices. Being pro-active, we engage students in mutual respect and decision-making (when appropriate). This gives the students choices and necessary limits suited to their age.
- We deal with a student's misbehaviour by considering that it may be expressing unmet needs of being loved, in control, competent, and treated with respect. We seek to remedy children's misbehaviour by fostering self-discipline. To do this, we foster their self-esteem and a positive identity. We promote their sense of security, autonomy, initiative, and industry.

Common Procedures

Each school will provide a common pastoral team approach to the discipline process. Members of the team may include: students, parents, teachers, administration, counsellor, classroom support teacher and others.

Staff, students and parents will work towards promoting a safe learning environment.

Staff will practice proactive instructional methods to develop positive behaviour in students by:
• identifying appropriate alternative behaviours;
• designing an environment which facilitates success by prompting and reinforcing appropriate alternative behaviours;
• using clear, goal-directed messages;
• monitoring student behaviour.

Students will learn appropriate behaviours by:
• identifying what was wrong;
• taking responsibility for their actions;
• finding a way to solve the problem which leaves the dignity of everyone intact;
• learning alternatives for dealing with a similar problem;
• helping to heal everyone harmed.

Parents will be informed as needed. Their assistance may be requested to promote additional strategies that enhance their child's decision-making ability.

Intensive Interventions

Schools and families will work to create and implement individual behaviour plans when a student has recurring behaviour issues. Developing a natural support network, this process for intervention may include:

• identification of skills and strategies that need further development;
• access to counselling services;
• access to the parish team;
• referral for specialized services;
• restitution to repair damage to relationships, persons or property;
• consequences such as modified participation in school activities, loss of privileges, school detentions, temporary removal from class(es), clearly directed in-class supervision by parent, etc.

Parent meetings will be held to monitor any intervention behaviour plan.

Under certain circumstances a principal may suspend a student from class, school (to a maximum of 5 days), riding the school bus or other school-related activities following the Education Act and Fort McMurray Catholic School Division Administrative Procedures.

The School Administration is responsible for clarifying, interpreting, and applying this document.

Parents and guardians are always invited and encouraged to discuss with administrators and teachers any concerns they have in these procedures.